

# Isaiah 1-44 Devotionals & Sermon Illustrations

This page has devotionals and sermon illustrations on Isaiah from Today in the Word, F B Meyer, G Campbell Morgan, C H Spurgeon, and many other sources.

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## ISAIAH 1

Isaiah 1:18-20; 29-30.

They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor. - Isaiah 61:3b

TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL In ancient Canaanite religion, trees symbolized fertility. Fertility rituals often took place under sacred trees, symbolizing participation in the earth's life. These rituals were believed to bring better harvests, more children, and increased vitality. But as we see from Isaiah 1 and 61, this misplaced worship brought death instead of life.

In the next four studies we'll see that Scripture uses trees to symbolize Israel. In Isaiah 1, Israel is rebuked for putting its delight in "sacred oaks" and special gardens, places devoted to pagan sacrifices and fertility rituals. Instead of trusting its Creator for fullness of life, Israel trusted His creatures. The result? Lifelessness and spiritual drought. "You will be like an oak with fading leaves," the Lord says, "a garden without water" (v. 30). Delight in anything apart from the Life Giver eventually leads to spiritual barrenness.

Isaiah 61 speaks of the restoration of the faithful in Israel after the Exile. In a series of opposing poetic images, this passage prophesies how the Lord will exchange Israel's barrenness for new life. Instead of ashes, there will be beauty; instead of mourning, gladness; instead of despair, praise (v. 3). The final line of this verse, which is easy to miss, recalls the image of Isaiah 1--instead of dying idolatrous oaks, "they will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor."

By returning to its Maker, Israel will thrive. In the same way, by recognizing that we are the work of God's hands (Isa. 60:21) and that creating life is His work, not ours, we grow. Because we worship Him, we will image Him; we will display His splendor.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY St. Augustine once said, "What we love we shall grow to resemble." Where is your heart directed today? Toward a "sacred oak" of your own making or toward the Maker of oaks?

- **Note that all Today in the Word devotionals are from [Moody Bible Institute](#).**

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**Isaiah 1:13-20; Isaiah 1:1-2:5**

**Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Isaiah 1:18**

How much can you trust your boss? Not much, according to a recent study conducted by Florida State University. Researchers surveyed more than seven hundred employees about how their supervisors treated them. Thirty-nine percent claimed unkept promises; 37 percent cited a lack of credit for good work or ideas; 31 percent reported receiving the "silent treatment"; 27 percent said bosses have complained about them to co-workers; 24 percent described invasions of privacy; and 23 percent said their supervisors blamed others to cover up their own mistakes.

God is a very different kind of Boss. For starters, He always keeps His promises. His faithfulness is one of the core themes of the

book of Isaiah, our focus for this month's devotions. We've set for ourselves the rather ambitious goal of covering all 66 chapters in the 30 days of June, and we're glad you've decided to join us! If your time constraints require briefer readings, we've provided a shorter alternate reading choice for most days.

Isaiah, whose name means "the Lord saves," began his prophetic ministry in 740 B.C. Isaiah 1–39 of the book that bears his name were probably written around 701 B.C., with the remaining chapters finished in his later years. Its themes are numerous and include judgment, exile, rebellion, pride, salvation, holiness, justice, mercy, hope, the Messiah, and God's sovereignty and kingdom. The New Testament quotes Isaiah more than all the other prophets combined!

The book opens with a charge of covenant-breaking against Israel. Like a child who rebels against a parent, the people—in particular the leaders—had forsaken the Lord. Though they followed the forms of worship, their prayers and sacrifices were empty and meaningless. Even so, the "Holy One of Israel"—a signature phrase of Isaiah—offered another chance for them to repent, be forgiven, and avoid judgment and discipline (Isaiah 1:18, 27–28). To underline this hope, Isaiah also imparted a future vision of the entire world at peace under God's rule (Isaiah 2:1–5).

**APPLY THE WORD** Studying Isaiah in a single month is a bit like trying to devour a bakery's entire stock in one sitting. Rather than calling this a "book study," perhaps we should call it a "whirlwind tour"! It will probably prove helpful to you to obtain one or two commentaries to assist you during these devotions and as resources for future study in Isaiah.

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**C H SPURGEON** Spurgeon's Expositions often have a devotional flavor so be sure to check out what he writes on...

[Isaiah 1](#)

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**Isaiah 1:18 Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.**

I have heard of a certain divine, that he used always to carry with him a little book. This tiny volume had only three leaves in it; and truth to tell, it contained not a single word. The first was a leaf of black paper, black as jet; the next was a leaf of red-scarlet; and the last was a leaf of white, without spot. Day by day he would look upon this singular book, and at last he told the secret of what it meant. He said, "Here is the black leaf, that is my sin, and the wrath of God which my sin deserves; I look and look, and think it is not half black enough to represent my guilt, though it is as black as black can be. The red leaf reminds me of the atoning sacrifice and the precious blood; and I delight to look at it, and weep, and look again. The white leaf represents my soul, as it is washed in Jesus' blood and made white as snow." SPURGEON.

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**Isaiah 1:1–23**

They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. Titus 1:16

The prophet Isaiah received visions from the Lord during the reigns of four kings of Judah (approximately 740–698 B.C.). His visions are recorded in the book of Isaiah. Presumably, Isaiah 1 was written after the Assyrians ravaged the countryside of Judah, leaving only Jerusalem standing in 701 B.C. (Isa 1:7–9). By this point in Judah's history, those in power had developed a system of heavy economic burdens imposed upon the weak. Vulnerable people were denied justice and the religious practices of the day legitimized and perpetuated the injustices.

As we read Isaiah 1, we become like observers in a court of law. Today's reading is the Lord's indictment upon Judah. Pay attention to the emotions and tone of the passage: anger, displeasure, hostility, and intense frustration. Judah is sinful and estranged from God. They have rebelled against their Father (Isa 1:2); they are shamefully compared with animals (Isa 1:3); they instinctively do evil and have completely turned against the LORD (Isa 1:4). The "survivors" were the only hope of redemption from this sober situation (Isa 1:9).

Why is the Lord so outraged with His people? Let's look at Isa 1:10 through Isa 1:17. The people of Judah think they're fulfilling worship; but the Lord charges them with hypocritical worship (Isa 1: 13–14). Their sacrifices, prayers, and rituals are meaningless to God because their behavior does not match up. Their "evil deeds" are identified as injustice, exploitation of the oppressed, and denying support to those without social safety nets (Isa 1:16–17). God does not mince words. This behavior disgusts Him, reflects a sinful heart, and results in hollow worship.

It is not simply that seeking justice is a bonus to worship. Rather, pleasing worship is impossible apart from seeking justice. God calls for repentance and change and warns of the consequences of further disobedience (Isa 1:18–23).

**APPLY THE WORD** Today's reading is a solemn reminder that God looks beyond church attendance and daily prayer. We cannot claim to worship God and then ignore—or participate in the oppression of—the vulnerable members of our society. True worship reflects His heart by seeking justice on their behalf. As you reflect on Isaiah 1, repent for ways that you and your Christian community

might be like Judah. Ask God to reveal injustice in your midst and align your heart with His through tangible action.

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### **Isaiah 1:25 I will purge away thy dross, and take away thine alloy. (R.V., marg.)**

The silver had become dross. Jerusalem, the chosen city, was filled with infidelity, formalism, impurity, and deeds of violence. She had been full of judgment, righteousness had lodged in her; but now, murderers. And this was the reason for the blows that had fallen upon her with such unsparing force. The whole land was now desolate; the cities burned with fire; only a small remnant of the people was left. The prophet, his patriot heart wrung with grief, compares her to a sick man in the last stage of disease, the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint; from the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness in it. Would it not be well for us to search our hearts, and ask whether there may not be some counterpart to this in our declension from our God, and the consequent suffering to which we have been brought? He loves us too well to allow the process of deterioration to go unchecked. But here the Almighty Lover of his people resolves to bring his hand to the work of entire purging and cleansing. He will no longer simply punish. He will take away the men who had been his adversaries and enemies from the midst of his people, thoroughly purging away the dross and taking away all the tin. There is an immeasurable difference between punishing and refining. It is a great matter for the soul, when God ceases from the one and commences the other; and when we no longer suffer from the results of past sins, but are restored as at the first, and converted as at the beginning. - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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### **Isaiah 1.11 I am full of the burnt offerings of rams**

The first verse of this chapter constitutes the Title Page of the book, and gives us with perfect clearness the dates of Isaiah's prophesying. Isaiah 6 speaks of Uzziah's death. In Isaiah 1-5 we have the notes of the prophet's messages during the reign of Uzziah. This first chapter Ewald called "the great Arraignment"; and that most accurately describes it. Throughout, the nation is seen from the Divine viewpoint, and its terrible condition is vividly set forth. From the material standpoint, the reign of Uzziah was characterized by great prosperity, Moreover, the Temple service was maintained. At the heart of the chapter these words occur, and they are startlingly revealing of the Divine attitude toward the sacrifices which are being offered. The words, "I have had enough of," are expressive of loathing, produced by satiety. The whole force of this is derived from the fact that all these offerings were Divinely appointed. What an interpretation we have here of the attitude of God toward all religious observances. When the highest and best of these, those of His own ordination, cease to be the expressions of a true spiritual and mental condition, He loathes them. The reason is clearly revealed in a subsequent sentence: "I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting." In all our exercises in worship we need to remember this. The singing of hymns, the offering of prayers, the giving of money, the study of the Word, all may become hateful 'to God, and do, when the spiritual and moral condition of the worshippers is not in harmony with what these things stand for. - G Campbell Morgan

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### **NOTES FROM MY BIBLE - D L Moody**

Isaiah 1:2-4. A tenfold accusation:—

1. Children have rebelled against God. Isaiah 1:2.
2. Israel doth not know. Isaiah 1:3.
3. My people doth not consider. Isaiah 1:3.
4. A sinful nation. Isaiah 1:4.
5. A people laden with iniquity. Isaiah 1:4.
6. A seed of evil-doers. Isaiah 1:4.
7. Children that are corrupters. Isaiah 1:4.
8. They have forsaken the Lord. Isaiah 1:4.
9. They have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger. Isaiah 1:4.
10. They are gone away backward. Isaiah 1:4.

Isaiah 1:6. "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness."

Most people would do like the African princess who broke the looking-glass because she was so ugly. Civilization is a poor varnish. You have only to scratch it to turn up the same old egotism that has prevailed six thousand years.

Isaiah 1:16, 17. An eight-fold instruction:—

1. Wash you, make you clean. Isaiah 1:16.
2. Put away the evil of your doings. Isaiah 1:16.
3. Cease to do evil. Isaiah 1:16.

4. Lean to do well. Isaiah 1:17.
5. Seek judgment. Isaiah 1:17.
6. Relieve the oppressed. Isaiah 1:17.
7. Judge the fatherless. Isaiah 1:17.
8. Plead for the widow. Isaiah 1:17.

Isaiah 1:18. No matter how fast the color is, the blood of Jesus Christ can wash it out.

## ISAIAH 2

### Isaiah 2:1–5

**Praise be to the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. 1 Kings 8:56**

Religious cults have often attempted to predict the date of the end of the world. These prophetic claims aren't a recent phenomenon. The Essenes, one strict, ascetic sect of Jews, predicted the world would end with their revolt against Rome in A.D. 66 to 70. No one, of course, can predict end-times events with any accuracy. Jesus Himself said He didn't know the date the Father had set for the world's end (see Matt. 24:36).

While we have fewer specifics than we would like about the future that awaits us as God's people, the writings of the Prophets allows us to see a glorious vision of our future home. Often, the Prophets described the future by returning to images familiar in Israel's history: the Garden of Eden and the temple, as two primary examples.

In the first part of the book of Isaiah, the prophet is writing for Judah in the years leading up to Babylonian exile. In this passage, while the temple hasn't yet been destroyed, Isaiah envisions a temple greater than Solomon's temple (and greater than the second temple, which the exiles rebuilt after their return from exile). **This future temple** is different than the first and second temples because it is not a center exclusively dedicated to Jewish worship. Rather, "all nations will stream to it" (Isa 2:2). Furthermore, this temple will require no priestly caste to offer sacrifices and mediate between God and humanity. The teaching of God's Law will be done by God Himself. Finally, this temple represents the rest that God has been promising to give to His people. Warfare will end; the weapons of war will become farming implements.

When Solomon dedicated his temple, proclaiming that God had given rest to his people, he knew only the partial fulfillment of that promise. Isaiah foresaw its final completion.

APPLY THE WORD Rest is central to the divine promise of home. Jesus promised His followers a yoke of "rest" (see Matt. 11:28, 29). What could it look like for you to rest from trying to win God's approval? To rest from having to secure the good opinions of others? To rest from mindless busyness? To rest from fear and worry? God is inviting you into His rest today.

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**C H SPURGEON Spurgeon's Expositions often have a devotional flavor so be sure to check out what he writes on...**

[Isaiah 2](#)

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### Isaiah 2:3 "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord."

It is exceedingly beneficial to our souls to mount above this present evil world to something nobler and better. The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches are apt to choke everything good within us, and we grow fretful, desponding, perhaps proud and carnal. It is well for us to cut down these thorns and briars, for heavenly seed sown among them is not likely to yield a harvest; and where shall we find a better sickle with which to cut them down than communion with God and the things of the kingdom? In the valleys of Switzerland many of the inhabitants are deformed, and all wear a sickly appearance, for the atmosphere is charged with miasma, and is close and stagnant; but up yonder, on the mountain, you find a hardy race, who breathe the clear fresh air as it blows from the virgin snows of the Alpine summits. It would be well if the dwellers in the valley could frequently leave their abodes among the marshes and the fever mists, and inhale the bracing element upon the hills. It is to such an exploit of climbing that I invite you this evening. May the Spirit of God assist us to leave the mists of fear and the fevers of anxiety, and all the ills which gather in this valley of earth, and to ascend the mountains of anticipated joy and blessedness. May God the Holy Spirit cut the cords that keep us here below, and assist us to mount! We sit too often like chained eagles fastened to the rock, only that, unlike the eagle, we begin to love our chain, and would, perhaps, if it came really to the test, be loath to have it snapped. May God now grant us grace, if we cannot escape from the chain as to our flesh, yet to do so as to our spirits; and leaving the body, like a servant, at the foot of the hill,

may our soul, like Abraham, attain the top of the mountain, there to indulge in communion with the Most High. - Spurgeon Morning and Evening

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### **Isaiah 2:4 World Concord**

"And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:4).

Oh, that these happy times were come! At present the nations are heavily armed and are inventing weapons more and more terrible, as if the chief end of man could only be answered by destroying myriads of his fellows. Yet peace will prevail one day; yes, and so prevail that the instruments of destruction shall be beaten into other shapes and used for better purposes. How will this come about? By trade? By civilization? By arbitration? We do not believe it. Past experience forbids our trusting to means so feeble. Peace will be established only by the reign of the Prince of Peace. He must teach the people by His Spirit, renew their hearts by His grace, and reign over them by His supreme power, and then will they cease to wound and kill. Man is a monster when once his blood is up, and only the LORD Jesus can turn this lion into a lamb. By changing man's heart, his bloodthirsty passions are removed. Let every reader of this book of promises offer special prayer today to the LORD and Giver of Peace that He would speedily put an end to war and establish concord over the whole world. Spurgeon Faith's Checkbook

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### **Isaiah 2:12-22; Isaiah 2:6-4:6**

**The arrogance of man will be brought low and the pride of men humbled; the Lord alone will be exalted in that day. Isaiah 2:17**

You might know the famous baseball poem, "Casey at the Bat." Although their team is losing, the "Mudville" fans are sure they'll win if only their hero, Casey, can bat. Their wish is granted: "There was ease in Casey's manner as he stepped into his place; / There was pride in Casey's bearing and a smile on Casey's face." In "haughty grandeur" he takes two strikes. Then he digs in his heels, grits his teeth, takes a powerful swing ... and misses. "There is no joy in Mudville—mighty Casey has struck out."

"Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18). Throughout Isaiah, we see God's judgment on the proud. The impressive images for pride in today's reading include tall trees, mountains, ships, and strong towers—all brought low by the Lord. The root problem is that while God alone is worthy of worship, the Israelites were busy worshiping false gods. To rely on idols rather than God is not only wrong but arrogant. By the time God was finished with them, they would not only not worship their idols, but be glad to throw them away to any rat or bat that would take them (Isaiah 2:20)!

In this sense, God's coming and splendor was a terrible thing for the Israelites. To see Him was to understand immediately the folly of their ways, to know that disobedience deserves punishment and that His righteous anger was directed at them. They had brought His judgment on themselves—especially the leaders, who had been selfish and unjust (Isaiah 3:8–15). The judgment would include deprivation, oppression, and loss of life.

Chapter 4 brings hope, in the back-and-forth rhythm we often find in Isaiah. A remnant of survivors will return, the land will become fruitful again, and the Lord will once again be the refuge and protection of His people. The "Branch of the Lord" is a messianic image that will be further developed later in the book.

**APPLY THE WORD** Today's passage alludes to the cloud and pillar of fire that led and guided the Israelites during the Exodus and signified God's presence with His people. Though wandering in the wilderness was something of a low point in their history, God's faithfulness was very real and never faltered. Recall a similar time in your own life—a time when things were bad but God's presence was real and powerful. Then think about believers you know and pray about who most needs to hear your encouraging story.

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### **Isaiah 2:5 O House of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.**

To what a walk are we called! In newness of life: "Like as Christ was raised from the dead to the glory of the Father." In Christ: "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." Like Christ: "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought so to walk even as He walked." By and after the Spirit: "Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Worthy of God and well pleasing to Him: "Walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing, being fruitful." In heavenly love, and light, and faith: "Walk in love"; "Walk in the light, as He is in the light"; "Walk by faith, not by sight."

This invitation is primarily addressed to the house of Jacob. Sometimes the elect people are spoken of as Israel; but when Jacob is used, they are reminded of the vein of duplicity and chicanery which lies imbedded in their nature. Such people need specially to "walk in the light of the Lord" until the brooding darkness of their nature is dispelled. You will never succeed in ridding yourself of the self-life, with its jealousies and impurities, until you have learned to walk in the light of the Lord. Nothing is so hostile to disease and

corruption as light and air; believe me, the one way by which we can become sound and strong is to abide in Christ, that He may abide in us.

Walk involves steps. We cannot enjoy the presence of God as a whole unless it governs and illumines every step. We must be perpetually looking into our Fathers face and asking where to place the next step. We must have fellowship with Him in all things; then we, who have been darkness, will be light in the Lord, and as we walk in the light we shall become children of light.. - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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I am full of the burnt offerings of rams—Isa 1.11

The first verse of this chapter constitutes the Title Page of the book, and gives us with perfect clearness the dates of Isaiah's prophesying. Isaiah 6 speaks of Uzziah's death. In Isaiah 1-5 we have the notes of the prophet's messages during the reign of Uzziah. This first chapter Ewald called "the great Arraignment"; and that most accurately describes it. Throughout, the nation is seen from the Divine viewpoint, and its terrible condition is vividly set forth. From the material standpoint, the reign of Uzziah was characterized by great prosperity, Moreover, the Temple service was maintained. At the heart of the chapter these words occur, and they are startlingly revealing of the Divine attitude toward the sacrifices which are being offered. The words, "I have had enough of," are expressive of loathing, produced by satiety. The whole force of this is derived from the fact that all these offerings were Divinely appointed. What an interpretation we have here of the attitude of God toward all religious observances. When the highest and best of these, those of His own ordination, cease to be the expressions of a true spiritual and mental condition, He loathes them. The reason is clearly revealed in a subsequent sentence: "I cannot away with iniquity and the solemn meeting." In all our exercises in worship we need to remember this. The singing of hymns, the offering of prayers, the giving of money, the study of the Word, all may become hateful to God, and do, when the spiritual and moral condition of the worshippers is not in harmony with what these things stand for.

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O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.—Isa. 2.5

After the indictment of the nation contained in the first chapter, there follows a prediction of the ideal conditions which will obtain "in the latter days," that is, in the established Messianic Kingdom. "The light of Jehovah" referred to in this appeal is the glory of that vision of the latter days. It is to be noted that immediately after this appeal, the prophecy returns to the sad conditions then existing, to a denunciation of them, and to a declaration that in order to end them, and bring in the true order, "there shall be a day of Jehovah," and that a day of "the terror of Jehovah." The arresting and instructive fact is that in the midst of the darkness and degeneration, this prophet of God had a clear vision of the ultimate glory, an unwavering faith that it would be realized; and that he described it, and made his appeal to the nation to walk in the light of it. An examination of all the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, and the Apostolic writings of the New, will show that this has always been true of the God-inspired messengers. No men saw so clearly, or denounced so consistently and vehemently, the godless and calamitous ways of wickedness; but they never lost sight of the final triumph of righteousness, and they constantly bade men "rejoice in the hope of the glory of God," and called them to walk in the light thereof. This is a matter which we do well to ponder. In days of darkness, and of widespread corruption, we are in danger of becoming so conscious of these conditions, as to forget, or even to doubt, the ultimate issue of the triumph of God. This never happens to those who live in close fellowship with God. They see through all the mysterious present, to the determined end, and in the light of that glory, order all their steps. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 3

### Isaiah 3

#### **They have brought disaster upon themselves. Isaiah 3:9**

One scholar has described biblical lament this way: "Lament is an act of truth-telling, a public act of grieving and hope that awakens us from our numbness. Hearing the stories and voices of lament refines and drives our discernment and critique of the principalities and powers at work in the world."

As part of our examination of lament over sin, today's passage focuses our attention on the "public act of grieving" for the consequences of sin. Much of the language in this chapter is reminiscent of what we read in the judgments on Tyre and Moab, but there is an important difference. Those judgments and laments were for people who, by opposing the nations of Israel and Judah, had made themselves enemies of God and His people. This judgment is on God's own beloved people, who had rebelled against Him.

Their sin has been serious: "they parade their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it" (Isaiah 3:9). They have oppressed the poor (Isaiah 3:15). They have valued vanity and finery over the beauty of obedience to God (Isaiah 3:16–23). This passage predicts the coming exile, when the Babylonians would remove people from the land of Judah in several waves (Isaiah 3:1–7; see 2 Chronicles 36).

What to do in the face of the consequences for this widespread sin that had infected every part of society? Lament and mourn (Isaiah 3:26). There are no excuses, no rationales to offer God to explain away their sin. It is too late for economic debates or religious arguments. Lament is the truthful response to the recognition of sin and its consequences. Lament declares that sin has been at work and suffering has resulted. Lament forces the people to grieve over their sin instead of flaunting it.

**APPLY THE WORD** The corporate practice of lament allows us to confront our sin, to stop making excuses for it, to acknowledge its consequences, and to direct our hope to God. Many churches have moved away from a corporate time of lament, which might be one reason we see churches making the same mistakes as Judah: flaunting sin, not caring for the poor, and valuing external finery.

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### **Isaiah 3:10 "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him."**

It is well with the righteous ALWAYS. If it had said, "Say ye to the righteous, that it is well with him in his prosperity," we must have been thankful for so great a boon, for prosperity is an hour of peril, and it is a gift from heaven to be secured from its snares: or if it had been written, "It is well with him when under persecution," we must have been thankful for so sustaining an assurance, for persecution is hard to bear; but when no time is mentioned, all time is included. God's "shalls" must be understood always in their largest sense. From the beginning of the year to the end of the year, from the first gathering of evening shadows until the day-star shines, in all conditions and under all circumstances, it shall be well with the righteous. It is so well with him that we could not imagine it to be better, for he is well fed, he feeds upon the flesh and blood of Jesus; he is well clothed, he wears the imputed righteousness of Christ; he is well housed, he dwells in God; he is well married, his soul is knit in bonds of marriage union to Christ; he is well provided for, for the Lord is his Shepherd; he is well endowed, for heaven is his inheritance. It is well with the righteous—well upon divine authority; the mouth of God speaks the comforting assurance. O beloved, if God declares that all is well, ten thousand devils may declare it to be ill, but we laugh them all to scorn. Blessed be God for a faith which enables us to believe God when the creatures contradict him. It is, says the Word, at all times well with thee, thou righteous one; then, beloved, if thou canst not see it, let God's word stand thee in stead of sight; yea, believe it on divine authority more confidently than if thine eyes and thy feelings told it to thee. Whom God blesses is blest indeed, and what his lip declares is truth most sure and steadfast. Spurgeon Morning and Evening

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The daughters of Zion are haughty ... —Isa 3.16

These words constitute the central charge made against the women at the court, in this message of the prophet. The whole oracle is a brilliant and satirical exposure of the vanity and futility of their mode of life. This mode of life to the prophet was not vain and futile only; it was positively wicked in view of the fact that the luxury in which they lived was made possible by the crushing of the people, and the grinding of the face of the poor. Yet there is a deeper note here than that. It is not possible to imagine that a prophet like Isaiah would have wasted his time denouncing these women, if he had not recognized how they were involved in the guilt of the rulers, and the degeneracy of the nation. At a later period in this prophetic work he again denounced them (see chapter 32). Amos at the court of Samaria was fierce in his invective against the women. All this is very suggestive. The influence of women is most powerful for good or for ill. Ponce heard one of the keenest of observers say that no great movement for the uplifting of humanity had been generated in human history but that woman's influence had much to do with it. Whether so superlative a statement is capable of substantiation I do not know; but I believe there is a great element of truth in it. It is equally true that the part that women have taken in corrupting the race has been terrible. When the womanhood of a nation is noble, the national life is held in strength. When it is corrupt, the nation is doomed. Woman is the last stronghold of good or of evil. Compassion and cruelty are superlative in her. - G Campbell Morgan

## **ISAIAH 4**

**Isaiah 4:2-3; 6:8-13 ; Isaiah 11:1-5** A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. - Isaiah 11:1

In the children's story, The Giving Tree, a young boy receives gifts from a tree-friend. First the tree gives him branches to climb; later in life it gives him fruit. Eventually the tree offers its wood for building, until only a stump is left. The story closes with the old man, sitting sadly on the stump that once was his friend.



Stumps generally are images of destruction. They are the sad remains of lives that once flourished but do so no longer. In Isaiah's prophecy of rebellious Israel's destruction, tree stumps form part of the landscape of ruin, along with empty cities and ravaged fields—the work of invading armies (Isa 6:11).

Surprisingly, the stump here becomes an image of hope, since it will develop into the “holy seed” (Isa 6:13). This is one of three images of trees symbolizing Christ that we will examine. The remnant of the faithful, “the tenth,” though “laid waste,” will remain with their roots in the land. God judges, but does not utterly destroy His people.

Isaiah 11 shows the transformation of a ruined land into a land of peace through these very roots. Israel will be restored by “a shoot.” This shoot, the “holy seed,” is from David's line; from Jesse's roots “a Branch will bear fruit” (Is 11:1), a branch which Isaiah 4:2 describes as “beautiful and glorious.” Instead of a dead stump, new life will spring forth.

But will new life spring from the rebellious, cut-down Israel? What will mark this shoot as different? The fruitful, peaceful reign of the Branch, beautifully depicted in Isaiah 11, stems from two characteristics: “the Spirit of the Lord will rest on him,” and “he will delight in the fear of the Lord” (Isa 11:2). The Messianic Branch will do what Israel did not: delight fully in the Lord and fear Him.

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

God delights to bring forth shoots from stumps. Scripture reveals that His pattern is to bring water to deserts, a path in the wilderness, shoots from stumps

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### **Isaiah 4:2-6; Jeremiah 23:1-8 I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just. - Jeremiah 23:5**

#### TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

During dark, difficult moments for a nation, it's important to have a leader who can see the hope on the horizon and communicate that to a weary people. Prime Minister Winston Churchill played that role for Great Britain during World War II, reminding the exhausted, attacked, and grieving that although the price was heavy, they could defeat the Nazis and repel an invasion. The strength of his hope gave millions of people the encouragement to fight on against Nazi aggression.

Dark clouds of invasion, persecution, and exile swirled around the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah. Even though their people often rejected their message, it never became so dark that the prophets couldn't see the light, as God gave them visions of future glory and redemption.

In Jeremiah 23 God warned those who persecuted the Jews, as well as those who were false prophets (Jer:23:1, 2), warnings we should heed even today. Jeremiah also prophesied of a King that would come in David's line to “reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land” (Jer 23:5). Jesus was a descendant of David; both His mother Mary and His legal father Joseph were descendants in the line of David.

Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is called the Righteous Branch (Isa 4:5). Jesus deserves this interesting title not only because He is righteous, but also because He makes His people righteous by taking their sins upon Himself and placing them on the Cross. Bible commentator Matthew Henry said it this way, “His obedience unto death is the justifying righteousness of believers, and their title to heavenly happiness.”

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - We have discussed many names for Jesus—here we see Him called “the righteous Branch.”

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### **Isaiah 4:5 Over all the glory a canopy. (R.V.)**

These twain, the pillar of cloud by day, and the flaming fire by night, were reserved in the wanderings for the tabernacle only; but this promise predicts that they shall be the heritage of each individual home. “The Lord will create over every dwellingplace of Mount Zion, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night” (R.V., marg.). Each family may have its own cloudy pillar to guide, its own illumination through the dark hours, its own canopy from storm and rain and heat. Let this be your comfort: though your family is scattered afar, all the members may dwell in the same pavilion, be directed by the movements of the same pillar-cloud, and enlightened by the glow of the same fire. In God there is no distance; and they who abide in Him live in a dwelling-place which is wide enough to include the world, but narrow enough to draw our hearts into so small a circle that God and we and our loved ones may touch.

There is even more than this suggested in these words. Each holy soul may have all the gracious contents of this promise, because it has become the temple of the indwelling Lord, through the Holy Spirit. For thee there may be the pillar-cloud, arising to guide thy steps through the wilderness world, or settling down with its fleecy folds to rest. For thee, through long dark nights, the pillar of fire — and, indeed, only the darkness can reveal the bright light in the cloud. For thee also the canopy — for it is written, “He shall spread

his tabernacle over them” (Revelation 21:3, Gk.). How God suits Himself to our varying need — now a cloud, again as fire; in the storm a covert, from the heat a shadow. He is always adapting his help to our need. - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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By the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.—Isa 4.4

In the oracle concerning the women, the prophet had foretold the destruction of the city by reason of the corruption in which these women were involved, both as to cause and course. As ever, this messenger of God saw that the retribution resulting from Divine judgment would issue in restoration; and in the brief but beautiful utterances contained in verses 2 to 6 of this chapter he described the new order. In the process of that judgment, evil will be eliminated, and those left in Jerusalem will be holy; the daughters of Jerusalem will be washed from their filth and the city cleansed of its blood. The words we have stressed are those in which the prophet described the agency by which this process of cleansing will be carried out. It is a remarkable description: "The spirit of justice and the spirit of burning." Justice is government in action, and in strict and impartial justice, it is discriminative and irresistible. Burning is a process which exterminates the things that are base and unworthy, and purifies to freedom from all alloy the things which are noble and worthy. This conception of God as a Spirit of justice and of fire, recurs again and again in these Old Testament writings, and passes over into the New Testament with its interpretation of the age of the Spirit. While there are senses in which the Spirit as fire is now available and at work in special ways, as the result of the perfected work of the Son of God, there are senses in which all human history has known the presence and power of "the spirit of justice," and "the spirit of burning." That spirit ever blasts the evil, and establishes the good. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 5

**Isaiah 5:1-7; Ezekiel 15:1-8**

What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? - Isaiah 5:4

TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

In his epic fantasy, *The Silmarillion*, J. R. R. Tolkien tells the tragic tale of the Numenoreans, a race of men highly favored by the gods, who gave them a special island, blessed with good weather and rich produce, and taught them wisdom and craft.

The Numenoreans grew in power and splendor, but eventually they became proud. They made war on the men they once helped and ultimately challenged the gods. Their haughty acts led to the destruction of their land and people. Only a scattered remnant survived.

In Isaiah 5 and Ezekiel 15, we find a similar account of God's experience with Israel. Israel is likened to a vineyard; the Lord is the gardener and caretaker. Look at the care God lavished on His vineyard, "His delight." He chose a fertile hillside, rich in good soil; He cleared away stones and planted the best vines. Anticipating a good crop, He built a winepress to catch the grape juice and a watchtower to guard the harvest. But what was the harvest He gained? "Only bad fruit" (Isa. 5:2).

What fruit was the Lord expecting from Israel? The NIV Study Bible suggests that a wordplay in Hebrew answers this question: "He looked for justice [mishpat], but saw bloodshed [mispah]; for righteousness [sedaqah], but heard cries of distress [se'aqah]" (Isa 5:7). In other words, Israel had been equipped to produce justice and righteousness: it had been chosen by God, delivered from oppression by His hand, given the law, and blessed with the tabernacle of God's presence. Instead, Israel produced fruit that defied its careful cultivation.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY Scripture tells us, "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded" (Luke 12:48). List some of the recent ways in which the Lord has cared for you and "cultivated" you. Has He planted you in a fertile place? Sent good rain your way? Provided protection and safety? Pruned your branches?

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**C H SPURGEON Spurgeon's Expositions often have a devotional flavor so be sure to check out what he writes on...**

[Isaiah 5](#)

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**Isaiah 5:1-7; Isaiah 5 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness. Isaiah 5:20**

In the Parable of the Tenants (Matt. 21:33-44), Jesus described a landowner who planted a vineyard and rented it out. At harvest

time, he sent his servants to collect what was due, but the tenants refused to pay. Instead they beat, stoned, and killed the owner's messengers. When he finally sent his son, thinking they would at least respect him, they gave him the same violent treatment. Those foolish tenants would be severely judged for their wrong actions!

Clearly, Jesus based this parable on today's reading in Isaiah, which uses extended metaphors of a vineyard and a court case to summarize the history of God's relationship with Israel (Isa 5:7; cf. John 15:1–8). God had lovingly cultivated and cared for the vineyard, but it had yielded only bad fruit and as a result would suffer destruction. The "good fruit" should have been justice and righteousness, but there was none to be found. To judge the case in favor of God is an easy decision.

After the judgment comes the sentence, which is delivered in the form of six "woes," a word indicating both suffering and sorrow. Who deserved punishment? It's a lengthy list: first, the greedy super-rich who kept adding to their holdings at the expense of others; second, proud pleasure-seekers who had no respect for God (Isa 5:12); third, brazen mockers who sarcastically called for God to act because they didn't really believe He could or would; fourth, those who lacked moral discernment, who were themselves deceived as well as deceiving others; fifth, conceited or proud people; and sixth, leaders who corrupted justice in favor of their own selfish desires and temporal pleasures.

The sentence's grievous punishment is to be executed by a foreign conqueror. God will sovereignly "whistle" for it to come (as one might call a dog) and allow it to swoop in for the kill. Yet He will remain in control and pledged to watch over and eventually deliver His vineyard (Isaiah 27:2–3).

APPLY THE WORD Isaiah 5 is a lament over Israel's coming exile and the sin that brought it on. A "lament" is a song or poem expressing grief, sorrow, or regret—they are found in Psalms and Lamentations, for example, as well as throughout world literature. If you're feeling creative today or need something different for your devotions, you might try using this scriptural expression to write your own lament over sin or tragedy in your personal or family life. Offer it to the Lord as an expression of your heart.

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#### **Isaiah 5:4 What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?**

This is what the Owner of all souls will say of his dealings with each when the discipline and husbandry of time are over. Each of us is God's vineyard, and for each God has done the best possible. At the end of all things God will have no reason to feel that had He adopted some other method, the barren waste of some heart would have brought forth fruit. It will be seen then, Omniscience itself being witness, that every soul of man had the chance of becoming a fruitful vineyard; and if he became the reverse, it was due to no failure in either the wisdom or grace of God.

It is hard to believe this, hard to think that you would not have done better in some other circumstances; but it is nevertheless true that God could not have done better or more. He has trenched for water, gathered out stones which had hindered your fruitfulness, and planted you with slips from the True Vine. There has been the tower of his protection, and the wine-press of suffering! Ah, how eagerly He has looked that you should bring forth grapes! The pity of it is that there has been nothing but the wild growth of nature! But God cannot take the blame for this. He could not have done more than He has done. Alas that we should have so often thwarted Him!

"When I looked," "The Father seeketh," our Savior said. He comes down the garden path full often, seeking from us the fruits of the Spirit, the grace of prayer and supplication, the plants of his delight. "Let us see," He says, "whether the vine hath budded, and its blossom be opened, and the pomegranates be in flower." Too often it is as when Jesus looked for figs — there was nothing but leaves!. - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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He looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.—Isa. 5.7

These words are of supreme importance in that they constitute the prophet's interpretation of his own song of the vine-yard. In that song he had likened Judah to a plant of Jehovah's planting, from which he expected grapes, but which had brought forth wild grapes. Now the figure is explained. The fruit which Jehovah expected from the nation is described by the two words "justice" and "righteousness." In order to the bringing forth in the midst of the nations of "justice," that is true government; resulting from "righteousness," that is right relationship with God, He had created the nation. Instead of this fruit, it had produced oppression—literally bloodshed—and the cry of the oppressed. Therein lay its failure. Thus, in this remarkable song, did the prophet teach his contemporaries, and all those who study his song, that the Divine government of a nation requires that it should realize a true order within itself, in the interest of other nations; and where it fails to do so, and permits conditions which are those of oppression, He proceeds against it in destruction. We trace this figure of the vine through the Scriptures until we find its final occurrence in the allegory of Jesus. Finding it there, it is good that we should apply its principles to the Church as to her responsibilities for the world. So far as this age and this earth are concerned, she exists to bring forth the same fruits of justice and righteousness. If within her borders, oppression obtains, and the resultant cry, she also is failing. - G Campbell Morgan

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## ISAIAH 6

Friday, January 18, 2002

### Isaiah 6:1-8

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory. - Isaiah 6:3

#### TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

The Lord's Prayer begins, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name" (Matt. 6:9-note). Another version of the Bible translates this, "Our Father in heaven, let your name be kept holy."

Martin Luther commented on this verse: "God's name is holy in and of itself. It is not made holy by us. God is the one who makes all things holy and makes us holy as well. So 'let your name be kept holy' means that God's name should be made holy in us. When this happens, God becomes everything, and we become nothing."

The time of today's reading is about 740 B.C. in the days of the divided kingdom. In his vision, Isaiah came face to face with the glorious holiness of God. What did he see? He saw God, seated on a throne, high and exalted--that is, sovereign and supreme. The train of His robe filled the Temple, an image of immensity, majesty, and completeness (cf. Rev. 1:13-note). He also saw seraphim, six-winged angels who covered their faces and feet in God's presence and proclaimed His holiness (cf. Rev. 4:8-note). The smoke and shaking remind us of God's presence on Mount Sinai. The bottom line: "The whole earth is full of His glory" (Isa. 6:3).

How did Isaiah respond to this vision? He was immediately and absolutely conscious of his sinfulness. He cried out that he was "ruined" or "undone" (KJV). Surely no sinner could see the holy God and live.

How did God show mercy to Isaiah? Isaiah was not consumed (cf. Lam. 3:22, 23). What's more, the Lord sent an angel to him with a live, cleansing coal from the altar before His throne. The coal touched his mouth, corresponding to Isaiah's sense of "unclean lips" and his imminent prophetic calling. He had been eternally transformed!

TODAY ALONG THE WAY If you feel led to join the angels in proclaiming the utter holiness of our God, sing a relevant chorus or hymn, such as "Holy, Holy, Holy," during your prayer time today.

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**C H SPURGEON Spurgeon's Expositions often have a devotional flavor so be sure to check out what he writes on...**

### [Isaiah 6](#)

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**Isaiah 6:5-7.** Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips ... Then flew one of the seraphim unto me ... and said ... Thine iniquity is taken away.

Soon as the word is uttered, "I have sinned," that very moment flies the seraph. God "is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." When we confess them in the name of Jesus, justice, having been satisfied by the blood of Christ, is swift to pardon.

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### **Isaiah 6:8. Here am I.**

I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. What I can do, I ought to do, and what I ought to do, by the grace of God I will do. - D L Moody

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### **Isaiah 6:2 Each one had six wings.**

Seraphim signifies "burning ones," to designate their essence, their dazzling appearance, or their intense devotion. But whatever the symbol stands for, they needed the six wings. With twain each seraph covered his face — for reverence, he dare not look upon God. With twain he covered his feet — for humility, he recognized that he was unworthy. With twain he did fly — for service and obedience to the Divine commands.

It may be that we are taught that a third part only of our time and energy should be expended in activity; two-thirds to reverent fellowship and communion. Probably with most of us the proportion is in the other direction; and we give two-thirds to flight for God, and one-third only for fellowship with God.

The service that springs from such communion is directed by deep sympathy with the mind of God. The seraph did not wait for the Lord to send him to Isaiah with a live coal from the altar; but spontaneously the son of flame sped to do the required office, as though instinctively he realized that there was nothing else to be done for a man who had confessed himself to be vile. The

seraphim have heard that confession made so often, and have so often administered the same restorative to fainting hearts, that they do not need to be directed what to do. They know God's thought before He speaks a word. A notable emblem this of service! "One cried to another." Holy beings love to stir each other to higher themes, to worthier praise. Thus one bird may awake a woodland into minstrelsy; and one Luther an age. Is your heart full of burning love?— then seek to set others aglow.. - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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### **Isaiah 6:1-7 Woe to me! ... My eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty. Isaiah 6:5**

At the conclusion of the book of Job, after all the arguments between Job and his friends, God Himself appeared and asked: "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!" Stunned by God's awesome presence, Job humbly responded: "Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know ... My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes" (see Job 38–42).

Like Job, Isaiah in today's reading was overwhelmed. We often think of humility as a "horizontal" virtue, that is, one practiced person to person, but it properly begins as a "vertical" virtue; that is, it depends on an accurate sense of who one is before God. There's no quicker cure for pride than to compare the mortal to the immortal, the finite to the infinite, the selfish to the loving, and the sinful to the holy! That's what Isaiah experienced in his call and commissioning to become God's prophet.

The vision of God was majestic (Isaiah 6:1–4). He sat high up on a throne, showing His sovereign authority over all the earth, certainly including one individual like Isaiah. His robe further symbolized His royal grandeur. He was attended by angels called "seraphs," whose body language proclaimed His holiness and glory. To put an exclamation point on everything, awe-inspiring thunder rocked the temple where Isaiah was.

Isaiah's response to this vision was complete humility (Isaiah 6:5). He was engulfed in a sense of his own sin and unworthiness both as an individual and as part of the community of Israel. He could not answer a call to ministry, or even receive one, until God took the initiative to purify and cleanse him from sin (Isaiah 6:6–7). The dramatic picture of a live coal touching Isaiah's lips reminds us that God's forgiveness is both painful and powerful.

**APPLY THE WORD** As we know, confession of sin is a needed spiritual habit in our lives (1 John 1:9). Too often, though, we approach confession the same way we approach petitions, reading a "laundry list" and checking off each item. Today, we suggest having a different kind of time of confession, one done with the attitude of Isaiah. Pray in the "woe is me" spirit that recognizes the chasm between a perfectly holy God and ourselves, and thus cries out for the forgiveness and cleansing only He can give.

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### **Isaiah 6:1-7**

#### **TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL**

According to a report on the history of the automobile, the boom in the fast food industry may be explained largely by the car's entrance into American daily life. The first "carhops" appeared in the 1930s, allowing people to eat without leaving their cars. Then in the 1970s some restaurants tested the idea of "drive-through" service. The new service was a big hit with people who were too busy to park and eat, let alone sit at a table. Drive-through service, cell phones, beepers and other time-saving devices say a lot about a culture that always seems to be in a hurry.

Unfortunately, as Dr. Tony Evans points out, this "hurry up and get it" mentality has invaded the church. The result is that many Christians want their worship the way they want their hamburgers. They want to drive up to church, grab an hour of worship, and drive off--what Dr. Evans calls "drive-through worship." Nothing could be more opposed to this mentality than the awe-inspiring heavenly scene before us today. The vision Isaiah saw would bring the busiest "drive-through worshiper" screeching to a halt. In Isaiah 6, the curtain is pulled back on the never-ending worship of God that fills heaven.

There is a lot happening in this chapter of Scripture. One purpose of Isaiah's vision was to commission him for service (Isa 6:8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13). Another purpose was to reveal God's holiness and worthiness to be worshiped. Today, we want to step back and take in the incredible scene the prophet describes.

We learn much about heaven in these few verses. For instance, God's throne is in the heavenly temple, which, as we will learn later this month, served as the pattern for the earthly temple. We also catch a glimpse of the ceaseless worship that the angels of heaven render to God (Isa 6:3, cf. Rev. 4:8-[note](#)), and we can almost feel the ""doorposts and thresholds"" of the temple shaking.

**TODAY ALONG THE WAY** -Is your worship being offered to God on His terms and timetable, or has it become a "drive-through experience"?

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## Isaiah 6:4-8; Mark 5:24-34

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. - Psalm 51:17

“Apart from Me—you are nothing.” (Jn 15:5). In light of this truth the great saint of yesteryear Andrew Murray prayed...

Lord, I gladly accept the arrangement: I am nothing—You are all. My nothingness is my highest blessing, because You are the Vine, which gives and works all, so be it, Lord!— [Andrew Murray, The True Vine](#)

Humility and brokenness aren't very popular in our culture. Although some action heroes show sensitivity, the message of our society is that success demands toughness. But “having your act together” runs contrary to Scripture. Over and over, we see people driven to the Lord in their helpless need.

For the past few days, we've considered aspects of God's nature that need to be understood to foster prayer. For the next few days, we'll consider attitudes of our hearts that open us to prayer. Helplessness is one such attitude.

Consider the following insights from **Ole Hallesby** in his excellent book, Prayer:

“Listen, my friend! Your helplessness is your best prayer. It calls from your heart to the heart of God with greater effect than all your uttered pleas. He hears it from the very moment that you are seized with helplessness, and He becomes actively engaged at once in hearing and answering the prayer of your helplessness (cp He 2:18-note).”

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Self-sufficiency can be a serious barrier to prayer. Many people take the adage “the Lord helps those who help themselves” to mean that they can never come to the Lord until they have exhausted their own resources. But passivity and helplessness are not the same. Isaiah's attitude was brokenness in the blinding light of God's holiness (Isa 6:5). Yet Isaiah's eager response, “Here I am!” (Isa 6:8) reveals how he was actively ready to respond to God. Or consider the woman in today's reading from Mark. Despite her best efforts to find help, her terrible condition worsened and she desperately sought Jesus (Mk 5:26, 27). Both this woman and Isaiah show the close link between humility, coming helplessly before the Lord, and obedience.

Do you ponder your true helplessness and vulnerability apart from Christ? Reflect back on **Andrew Murray's** prayer. Then ask the Lord to translate your sense of brokenness into an eager willingness to follow Him more fully.

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## Isaiah 6:1-7 Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory. - Isaiah 6:3

In his book *Our God Is Awesome*, Bible teacher Tony Evans says, “Holiness is the centerpiece of God's attributes. Of all the things that God is, at the center of His being, He is holy... God's holiness unlocks the door to understanding and making sense out of everything else about Him.”

This is an important truth for us to understand in relation to heaven and the kind of people who will be there. Dr. Evans goes on to say, “Only one thing happens [in heaven]: people get to know God. You will spend eternity in heaven getting to know God.”

Since God is perfectly holy and heaven is His dwelling place, it follows that heaven must be a holy place where no sin can exist. That's exactly what the Bible teaches. The prophet Habakkuk says of God, “Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong” (Hab. 1:13).

Isaiah was given a vision of heaven and of the God of heaven that few others have ever experienced. The prophet's attention was immediately drawn to the throne where God rules in awe-inspiring majesty and holiness. He saw the angels surrounding the throne who eternally call out the reality of God's holiness. In fact, over 600 years after Isaiah lived, John heard the same testimony in heaven: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty” (Rev. 4:8-note).

In this heavenly environment of pure holiness, holy people are the only ones who will be at home. Thankfully, through salvation, Jesus Christ clothes us with His holiness so we can stand forgiven and clean in God's presence. He places His Spirit within us so that Christ is formed in us (Gal. 4:19).

We still have to live in a sin-scarred world, of course, and that can wear us down at times. It's great to realize that in heaven we will finally be free from the presence and power of sin, both our own sin and the evil that surrounds us. Let's also remember that God made us holy in Jesus Christ not just to prepare us for heaven in the sweet by-and-by, but so we can live above the pull of sin in the mixed-up here-and-now.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - It's a staggering thought to realize that naturally unholy people like us can look forward to sharing heaven with our sinless God.

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## **Isaiah 6:1-7 Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory. - Isaiah 6:3**

A. W. Tozer once said the most important thing anyone could know about him was what he believed about God. That's another way of saying that theology matters. What Tozer said about the importance of his view of God can be said about each one of us. What we believe about God is so crucial because everything else in our lives is built on that foundation. If the foundation is shaky, things will start to crumble.

As with most of our studies so far this month, we can't summarize everything the Bible teaches about God in a few lines. Isaiah 6 is a good representative because it captures the majesty of God's Person, His perfect holiness and overwhelming presence. Isaiah knew he was standing before an awe-inspiring God when he had his vision in the temple.

Missionaries and others who live among various cultures observe that people tend to create and then worship gods whom reflect their own peculiar tendencies. A tribe or village prone to violence invariably creates gods whom they believe delight in violence and blood.

This was true in the nations around Israel, as well. That's one reason God commanded the Israelites to eradicate the Canaanites.

How different the true God is from one of these created beings. He is so unlike us, so exalted over His creation, that we can't control Him or make Him simply a reflection of ourselves.

Isaiah was struck with awe, and even terror, when he saw a vision of God on His throne. The presence of the seraphim and their thunderous voices are a picture of indescribable majesty. The repetition of the word 'holy' speaks of God's perfect holiness His complete purity and separation from anything evil.

Isaiah did the same thing we would have done. He cried out in distress, suddenly very aware of his sinfulness. But it was at this point that the character of this terrifying God shined through. Instead of erasing the prophet with a blast of holiness, God sent an angel to cleanse and forgive Isaiah.

We don't have to ask Isaiah what he believed about God. The question was what Isaiah's encounter with God did to him. We face the same question because, amazingly, this holy God has said, 'Be holy, because I am holy' (1Pe 1:16-note).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Isaiah 6 is not the kind of text we can just read and put down. It seems to demand some reflection. But too many of our schedules allow too little time for reflection and meditation on God and His Word. God Himself tells us, 'Be still, and know that I am God' (Ps. 46:10). Make sure this day includes some time alone with the Lord to thank Him for His holiness, and consider what it means to be holy the way He is holy.

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**Isaiah 6:1.** Uzziah's reign was a kind of Victorian era in Jewish history. It was when this passed away into shame and disgrace that Isaiah saw the Eternal King on his throne. - D L Moody

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## **Isaiah 6:1-8 See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for. - Isaiah 6:7**

### TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

Have you ever accidentally burned yourself? You might have a vivid childhood memory of reaching out to touch that hot stove Mom warned you against. Perhaps you accidentally stepped on a live coal from your campfire during your last vacation. Maybe at your last backyard barbecue, the wind blew a bit of hot ash from your charcoal grill and singed your skin. Whatever the case, being burned wasn't a pleasant experience. Given a choice, you certainly wouldn't repeat it. So why in today's reading does God's angel touch a burning coal to Isaiah's lips?

It's a familiar passage, often associated with missions conferences or sermons on God's holiness, and rightly so. But the topic of forgiveness is also front and center here and deserves our consideration.

Over the past few days, we may have given you the idea that forgiveness is only pleasure. Certainly Scripture associates God's forgiving love with delight, but let's back up a bit and remember the big picture. Forgiveness follows repentance, and confessing and rooting out sin can be a painful experience. It certainly was for Isaiah.

Confronted with a vision of God's holiness, the future prophet felt crushed with the knowledge of his own sinfulness. He stood condemned and ruined. He saw that he was a sinful man in a sinful community. His focus on "unclean lips" may foreshadow his calling, but more likely signals that he understood how far short his worship fell of God's worthiness.

God knew Isaiah's need. He sent an angel with a live coal, an image associated with Old Testament sacrifices. For example, the high priest took live coals into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:12). This coal came from the altar before God's

throne--the real altar of which the earthly ones were only copies or shadows.

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

As we did on October 5, today we suggest that you use a physical object to help yourself grasp spiritual truth more vividly. If you can, use a fall barbecue or bonfire as an opportunity to meditate on the reality of Isaiah's coal.

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#### **Isaiah 6:1-8**

Visitors to the Mount St. Helens volcano in Washington can now peer directly into the huge crater left by the volcano's deadly eruption on May 18, 1980. A new visitors' center brings the mountain up close, satisfying the curiosity of many who want a firsthand look inside the famous mountain. The volcano has been mostly in-active since 1986, and scientists see little danger of another eruption any time soon.

No doubt visitors to Mount St. Helens will gasp as they look into a crater almost two miles wide. They are likely to stare, take pictures, buy postcards, and go home with another vacation memory. But what would happen if a human being were to look on the eternal God?

The Bible tells us that no one can see God and live, so awesome is His presence. But the prophet Isaiah came as close to seeing God as anybody in the biblical record. In a vision, Isaiah saw God's holiness and glory, and he was utterly overwhelmed.

This well-known passage teaches us a lot about the God we worship and the ministry of worship itself. Evidently Isaiah was in the temple in Jerusalem when he had this awe-inspiring vision of God's throne (Isa 6:1). The description of God leaves no doubt that Isaiah was dealing with the Lord of heaven and earth.

These verses give us a vivid word picture of God's majesty and glory. He is the eternally holy God, worthy of the adoration of angels who minister to Him in unending worship (v. 3, see also Rev. 4:8).

The seraphim Isaiah saw are magnificent beings. Through-out the Bible, whenever an supernatural being appeared to someone, that person was overcome with fear and amazement. But in God's presence, even the seraphs covered themselves in humility (Isa 6:2).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Peter also felt overwhelmed and sinful in God's presence after Jesus performed a miracle one day in Galilee (Luke 5:8).

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#### **SPEAKING AND FAITH: OUR LANGUAGE NEEDS GOD'S PURIFYING TOUCH**

##### **Read Isaiah 6:1-7**

**I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips.**

##### **Isaiah 6:5**

What is our greatest communication problem? Paul David Tripp asked this in *The Power of Words and the Wonder of God*. "My problem is in my heart. It's only when you and I stand before our Redeemer and are humbly willing to say, regardless of the flawed people that you live with and the fallen world that is your address, that you are your greatest communication problem, that you are heading in a direction of fundamental biblical change in your world of talk."

Sin in our hearts means sin in our speech. Our language needs God's purifying touch, as Isaiah learned in his vision. Today's reading is a familiar one, the text for many sermons on God's awesome holiness and answering His call on our lives. Words and language are also at the center of this memorable narrative. For starters, we read the angels' words of praise, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isaiah 6:3). Their voices thundered so powerfully that the temple shook and was filled with smoke.

Isaiah was immediately and overwhelmingly conscious of human sinfulness, both personally and in general. He knew he stood under judgment, and his sense of sinfulness started, appropriately for a prophet, with his use of language: "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5). As such, he knew he could not stand in the presence of an absolutely holy and pure God.

God took the initiative and sent an angel from His presence with a live coal symbolizing forgiveness and atonement. As Isaiah's confession focused on his "unclean lips," so also did God's forgiveness—the angel touched the coal to Isaiah's lips (Isaiah 6:7; cf. Jer. 1:9).



APPLY THE WORD Confession of sin is bad for our pride. We'd rather rationalize or minimize or just ignore the things we do wrong. After all, nobody's perfect, right? Confronted with a vision of God's glory and holiness, our petty excuses are swept away. Our sinfulness and need are undeniable. "I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy" (Ps. 116:1).

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## ISAIAH: SIN, FORGIVENESS, CALLING, AND WORSHIP

### Isaiah 6

#### Here am I. Send me! Isaiah 6:8

A group of college students met outdoors to pray one day in 1806. When a thunderstorm started, they sought the shelter of a nearby haystack, where they felt moved to pray that the gospel of Christ would spread around the globe. This famous "Haystack Prayer Meeting" led to the formation of the American Board, the first Protestant mission organization in the United States to send missionaries overseas.

"Here am I. Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8) has been the heartfelt cry of many generations of Christian missionaries. In today's reading, it was Isaiah's response to a vision of God's glory. Isaiah saw Him "high and exalted ... and the train of his robe filled the temple" (Isaiah 6:1). Attendant angels proclaimed His glory and holiness. Isaiah was filled with a sense of his own smallness in the presence of the awe-inspiring Almighty, and even more than that a sense of his own sinfulness in the presence of absolute holiness. God took the initiative and offered forgiveness, as symbolized in the "live coal" brought by an angel (Isaiah 6:6–7). The prophet's lips being touched with a burning coal is a painful image. Divine forgiveness is purifying and cleansing, but not necessarily gentle!

God then called Isaiah into ministry. Would he lead revivals and turn the people's hearts back to the Lord? Not quite. Instead, God described his prophetic ministry as hopeless, humanly speaking. The Israelites wouldn't listen; their hearts would remain hard. A severe judgment was coming. Yet hope remained, as God promised that a "holy seed" would remain and be the beginnings of the nation's renewal (Isaiah 6:13). Inspired by his vision of God's glory, Isaiah was undeterred by these mostly negative descriptions. He rejoiced to be part of God's plan and responded, "Here am I. Send me!"

#### APPLY THE WORD

We like to measure success with numbers and size and temporal power—converts, megachurches, media empires, political influence. By such measures, Isaiah was a failure. God measures success differently. Because Isaiah was obedient and faithful, God counted his prophetic ministry a rousing success! "Here am I. Send me!" is to submit to God for all results.

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#### Isaiah 6 Here am I. Send me! Isaiah 6:8

Inspired by today's reading, one of the classic hymns of the church proclaims: "Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore Thee, / Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea. / Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee, / Which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be... Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty! / All Thy works shall praise Thy name in earth, and sky, and sea. / Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty! / God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!"

Isaiah 1–5 have been like a preface for the book of Isaiah—now the prophet presents his credentials, so to speak. The year was 740 B.C., and the death of Uzziah, who had been for the most part a godly king for half a century, marked the end of an era (see 2 Chron. 26). In that year, Isaiah saw a vision of the Lord. He was seated on a throne, signifying kingship and sovereignty. The attendant angels testified to His holiness, while they covered their faces (because no one can gaze directly at God's glory) and their feet (because that's what should be done in the presence of holiness) (cf. Rev. 4:6–9).

Confronted with such a vision, Isaiah saw without delusion his own sinfulness and unworthiness. All pride and pretense were stripped away. "Woe to me!" he cried out. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty" (Isaiah 6:5). Like many of God's servants, he identified with his people even though he brought them a message that included judgment.

The focus is on Isaiah's lips because they had a special association with his calling as a prophet. They needed purifying or cleansing by divine fire—only then could he respond in obedience to God's question. The Lord entrusted His prophet with a message of judgment and repentance, but also warned him that the people would be unresponsive, that is, that his ministry would be unproductive from a human perspective (Isaiah 6:10).

APPLY THE WORD As you no doubt know, the hymn that began today's devotion, "Holy, Holy, Holy," is a classic. Especially if you've never considered memorizing a hymn before, this would be a good one to start with. If you don't have a hymnbook at home, the words and music (including a keyboard sound file) may be found at [www.cyberhymnal.org](http://www.cyberhymnal.org). Knowing the words by heart and singing

them throughout the day can help remind you of the awesome and loving greatness of our Father God.

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Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.—Isa. 6.3

We have all felt the wonder and the glory of this chapter. It records the vision which came to the prophet when Uzziah died. For the first time in Isaiah's life the throne of Judah was vacant. The man who had symbolized national order and authority had passed away. Then he saw the Throne which is never vacant, and the King, the Lord, Who never dies. He saw Him, moreover, surrounded by spirits of fire, serving Him, in worship, or—as in the case of the one who came to the prophet with the cleansing coal—in service. This vision gave him a new conception of Jehovah, and created a crisis in his work. The words we have emphasized constituted the song of the worshipping seraphim. In our thinking of this song we are too apt to think only of the first half, that in which they celebrated the holiness of Jehovah. Certain it is, that this was, and is, the first note. It must never be omitted or placed second. It gives interpretation to that which follows. But let us go on. They in their worship also celebrated the fact that "the whole earth is full of His glory." Thus, here in the Old Testament is emphasized the truth which contradicts the false idea that anything in the earth itself is inherently evil. The earth is full of His glory, which glory is manifested in its form, its colour, its resources for human well-being. Evil is there, but it is a poison introduced from without. Against it, the holiness of Jehovah is for ever at work; and at last, through redeeming activity, its victory will be won. Then, the whole creation, set free from the bondage of evil, will utter forth His praise. These are the fundamental convictions which make great ministries. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 7

**Isaiah 7:10-14; Matthew 1:23; 28:19-20 The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. - Isaiah 7:14**

TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

Charles Swindoll once said that if Dan Rather had given a news broadcast in 1809, it would have focused on Napoleon's sweep across Europe with no mention of the many remarkable babies born that year, all of whom would become quite famous. For example, the outstanding British political leader William Gladstone, the American writer Edgar Allan Poe, and President Abraham Lincoln were all born in 1809.

Similarly, no Roman newsperson was likely to have picked up from the news wires the story of a baby born to poor parents in a remote region of a troubled country. But heavenly "reporters" picked up this event and "broadcast" it to all who would hear (Luke 2:14). These glorious messengers knew that the most newsworthy event in the history of the world had occurred--the Savior had been born! All of history points to and centers around this one event.

Recall that Isaiah also lived in a troubled country. As the nation of Judah faced what seemed to be its destruction (Isa. 7:1-2), God used Isaiah to give a sign of His faithfulness to Judah: a virgin would give birth to a son who would be named Immanuel, which literally means "God with us." Scholars are not quite sure of the exact nature of this prophecy's fulfillment in Isaiah's time, but there can be little doubt of its later fulfillment in Jesus.

In fact, Matthew cited this verse as he wrote, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the birth narrative of Jesus (Matt. 1:23). The virginal conception of Jesus remains a unique event in all of history. This conception enabled Jesus to be both "Son of God" and "Son of Man"--titles we will look at beginning tomorrow.

Notice how concisely the two names given to our Lord at His birth summarize His unique nature: Jesus means "God is salvation," showing His deity, and Immanuel means "God is with us," showing His humanity.

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**C H SPURGEON Spurgeon's Expositions often have a devotional flavor so be sure to check out what he writes on...**

[Isaiah 7](#)

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**Isaiah 7:4 Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither let thine heart be faint. (R.V.)**

Serious trouble seemed imminent. Two strong peoples were bearing down on Jerusalem, and the heart of the house of David was moved as the trees of the forest are moved with the wind. Fear like this demoralizes men and nations. It unfits them for wise and strong action. Hence the necessity that Isaiah should reassure Ahaz with these words.

They were not sent to him because of his righteousness or virtue, for he was one of the weakest and most idolatrous of the kings of David's line; but because his foes were acting in direct collision with the determined counsel and purpose of God. Such a coalition

may be threatening you today; but it is in vain for the breakers of human pride and hate to attempt to intrude within limits which God has set around his chosen. Come, my soul, enter thou into thy chamber, and shut thy door about thee! Be quiet! God will fight for you. Be not dismayed; God's purpose cannot be overthrown. Let not thine heart be faint. Lo, a virgin has born a Son, whose name is Immanuel — God with us. "Fear not: I bring you glad tidings of great joy. To you is born a Savior."

God Incarnate is the end of fear; and the heart that realizes that He is in the midst, that takes heed to the assurance of his loving presence, will be quiet in the midst of alarm. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise in judgment against thee thou shalt condemn. Only be patient and be quiet.. - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

"For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,  
Seem here no painful inch to gain,  
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,  
Comes silent, flooding in, the main."

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### **Isaiah 7:1-9:7, Isaiah 9:2-7**

**The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. Isaiah 9:2**

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a condition that causes people to feel depressed from lack of sunlight. During the long winter months, for example, moods may turn blue for reasons related to brain chemistry, especially a lack of serotonin. Doctors have found several ways to treat SAD. One is negative ionization therapy, that is, a device emits negatively-charged oxygen particles. Another is a "dawn machine" that imitates the rising of the sun and provides equivalent light while people sleep. A third approach is bright light therapy, in which a patient sits under a special lamp for at least thirty minutes per day.

For the spiritual SADness of sin, the cure is the Light that dawns in Isaiah 9:2. This story begins with the sign of Immanuel. Israel and Syria wanted Judah to join them in an alliance against Assyria, but through Isaiah, God promised that the nation would not be defeated at this time. Therefore, they should stand not by military strategy but by faith in Him (Isaiah 7:9). King Ahaz's faux-pious response showed weak faith, so God gave a sign. A baby would be born to a woman standing right there in the king's court—Isaiah's fiancée, a virgin at that time. She would have a baby, and before the boy was very old—12 or 13 years old, the Jewish age of accountability—the previous prophecy would be fulfilled (Isaiah 7:14–17; cf. 8:3–4, 18). Referring to the child as "Immanuel" or "God with us" signified divine presence and protection.

In the larger context of biblical history, this sign had messianic implications (Matt. 1:22–23). Isaiah's child foreshadowed the Incarnation, the coming of "God with us," Jesus Christ. Like the prophet's unheeded message, He too would become "a stone that causes men to stumble" (Mt 8:14; Rom. 9:33). In the end, He will bring victory, freedom, and rejoicing, and be the fulfillment of all covenants (Isaiah 9:6–7).

**APPLY THE WORD** Given the focus in today's reading on the sign of Immanuel, as well as the fact that Isaiah is quoted more often than any other prophet in the New Testament, messianic prophecy in Isaiah would be a great topic for more in-depth Bible study. You could start by using the New Testament to identify passages regarded as being about Christ, then go back to Isaiah and study them in context. Such a study would take some time, but it would be well worth it.

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### **Isaiah 7:13-14; Matthew 1:22-23**

**They will call him Immanuel--which means, ""God with us."" - Matthew 1:23**

#### **TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL**

Let's do another one-question Bible quiz today, like the one we did on Tuesday (see the November 23 study). Which name or title of Jesus Christ was never again used in the Bible after its first mention? Once again, the answer is in today's verse.

In explaining the significance of Jesus' birth, Matthew said the people would call Jesus ""Immanuel,"" which the writer interprets for us. Matthew drew this name from Isaiah's prophecy, but it appears only once in the New Testament. If Jesus was ever called Immanuel, it is not recorded in Scripture.

But that doesn't lessen the power of this name. Matthew's purpose was not to give us an alternative name by which to call Jesus. The purpose of his quotation from Isaiah was to demonstrate that Jesus' virgin birth was the fulfillment of a prophecy made centuries before.

You may know that Matthew's use of Isaiah 7:14 has generated much controversy. The problem centers on how we should understand what Isaiah was saying. His prophecy had a meaning for his own day, which was clearly not a virgin birth, and a greater

meaning that Matthew explained.

It can be argued that the Hebrew word Isaiah used does not have to mean "virgin." But the woman the prophet was speaking about in his day could have been his future wife, with whom Isaiah later had a son (Isa. 8:1-4). In that case, she may have been a virgin at the time Isaiah 7:14 was written.

Isa 7:15, 16, 17 say this child was a "sign" to King Ahaz of Judah in that by the time the boy was old enough to know right and wrong, the kings of Israel and Syria, who were threatening Judah, would be driven away.

Whatever the specifics of Isaiah's prophecy, Matthew leaves no doubt about the virgin birth of Jesus. Quoting from the Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint, Matthew used a word that can mean only virgin.

Jesus is "God with us." No one else can claim that title, which makes Him unique. As you prepare your heart and home to celebrate His birth, praise God for sending His Son to live among us--and die for us.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY -When we did the little quiz on Tuesday (the November 23 study), we mentioned a book that contains more than 300 names for Jesus.

You may want to pick up a copy of this book for devotional use this Christmas. It's called Names of Christ, by T. C. Horton and Charles E. Hurlburt. Reading some of these names together and talking about them as a family will give your family's Christmas devotions a new perspective. Check your local bookstore for this unique book

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## **Isaiah 7:1-16 The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. - Isaiah 7:14**

### TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

The writings of C. S. Lewis form the basis for a popular statement regarding the choices people have about the claims of Jesus Christ. The statement says that Jesus was either a liar, a lunatic, or Lord of all in His claim to be the Son of God.

People are also faced with several choices concerning the birth of Jesus. His divine origin is validated by the Bible's teaching that He was born of a virgin. And people's eternal destiny may hinge on what they believe about this doctrine.

The prophecy of the Messiah's virgin birth is embedded in a passage that has immediate and far-reaching implications. The setting is the threat against the southern kingdom of Judah by an alliance between the kings of Aram (Syria) and Israel, the northern kingdom. God sent Isaiah to King Ahaz of Judah to assure him that the attack would never take place, because within several years God would bring down the kings of Aram and Israel.

Ahaz's refusal to ask for a confirming sign of this prophecy sounds very pious, but it was actually a way of rejecting God's message and His messenger Isaiah. This is why the prophet reacted the way he did.

Then came the message that God would sovereignly provide a sign. The virgin in the prophecy may have been the woman Isaiah called 'the prophetess' (Isa. 8:3), who could still have been a virgin when the prophecy was given.

This wife of Isaiah had a son, and by the time the boy was two or three, old enough to know right from wrong, the kings of Aram and Israel were no longer a threat to Judah. The boy's name, Immanuel, was a reminder of God's presence with Judah.

But the Holy Spirit clearly had something more in mind for this remarkable prophecy. Matthew said its ultimate fulfillment was in the birth of Jesus (Mt 1:22, 23) and the word Matthew used means a woman who is sexually pure.

That's why the Gospels are so careful to establish that Mary conceived Jesus before she had any relations with Joseph. Even in his genealogy, Matthew was careful to show that although Joseph was the husband of Mary, he was not the biological father of Jesus. The term 'of whom' (Matt. 1:16) is a feminine pronoun, pinpointing Mary alone as the parent of the Messiah.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY The claims of Jesus rise and fall together. If He was not virgin born, then His death would have no power to do anything for us. But God left us with a divine record of His Son's earthly origin, even in the middle of an eighth-century B.C. prophecy about human kings. It's time we paused this month to thank God for the truth and accuracy of His Word, which makes it possible for us to know what we believe

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## **ISAIAH: THE SIGN OF IMMANUEL**

### **Isaiah 7:7-16**

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. Isaiah 7:14

Earlier this year, The Gideons International gave out their two-billionth Bible or New Testament. Currently more than 300,000 members in 200 countries distribute the Scriptures in over 90 languages. The Gideons president said: "We are placing Bibles because they save souls. Behind every number is a face, behind every face a story, behind every story a priceless soul that could live throughout eternity."

The work of The Gideons reminds us that the Christmas story is God's story, not ours. All Scripture is essentially one story—the story of God's redemptive love for His people. This is why Isaiah, although he lived long before Jesus' birth, is part of the good news of Christmas. In today's reading, he prophesied concerning the virgin birth, an important article of the Christian faith (Matt. 1:22–23).

What was the original context of this prophecy? The northern kingdom of Israel had fallen to Assyria, and it looked like the southern kingdom of Judah would soon follow. God sent the prophet Isaiah, however, to tell King Ahaz that the nation's enemies would not be allowed to defeat it (Isa 7:7–9). They were merely human and would not overcome His divine protection. Judah should stand firm in faith and trust in God, unlike the choices made by the northern kingdom.

God encouraged Ahaz to ask for a sign, but he refused in a show of false humility that revealed his weak faith. The Lord graciously gave him a sign anyway. With reference to the immediate crisis, Isaiah's prophecy would come true by the time he had married his betrothed—who at the time of the prophecy was still a virgin—and they had a son (fulfilled in Isa 8:1–10). This child thus represented the protection and promise-keeping of "God with us."

Ultimately, God fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy through a literal virgin birth, that is, the birth of Christ, who is fully in every way "God with us."

APPLY THE WORD Today's verse, Isaiah 7:14, is well known as a messianic prophecy. But how much do you know about the original historical background? If you wish, make time for additional Bible study of this fascinating passage and perhaps even the entire book of Isaiah. You can consult helpful commentaries or even take a personal enrichment course on Isaiah through Moody Distance Learning.

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But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord.—Isa. 7.12

The title page of this book (Isa 1.1) refers to "The vision of Isaiah...in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah." In chapter six we have an account of the death of Uzziah, and the vision which then came to the prophet. In chapter 7 we find ourselves in the reign of Ahaz. That means that at least sixteen years had elapsed, for Jotham reigned for that period. He seems to have followed generally in the steps of his father Uzziah, and we have no record of any prophesying by Isaiah. With the coming to the throne of Ahaz the nation was plunged into more definite courses of evil. With his accession also the national life was threatened by a confederacy against it, of Israel and Syria. The king was filled with alarm. Then Isaiah interfered. He knew that Ahaz was likely to seek the aid of Assyria. This the prophet knew would be fatal. Therefore he appealed to him to rely only on God, and offered him a sign. It was to this offer that he replied in these words. Mark them well. They have all the sound of religion and reverence. He would not seek to prove Jehovah! And yet his refusal of the sign offered was irreligious and irreverent, for, it was born of the fact that he did not wish to follow the policy which the prophet argued. It was born also of fear. He knew that the sign would be given, and he did not desire it. There is the most solemn suggestiveness in this. How easy it is to deceive ourselves! Let us ever watch lest, under cover of some high-sounding phrases which seem to be those of religious conviction, we refuse the way and the will of God. It is one thing to tempt Jehovah in unbelief; but it is of the nature of the deepest unbelief to refuse a sign which He offers. - G Campbell Morgan

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**Isaiah 7:14 "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."**

Let us to-day go down to Bethlehem, and in company with wondering shepherds and adoring Magi, let us see him who was born King of the Jews, for we by faith can claim an interest in him, and can sing, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." Jesus is Jehovah incarnate, our Lord and our God, and yet our brother and friend; let us adore and admire. Let us notice at the very first glance his miraculous conception. It was a thing unheard of before, and unparalleled since, that a virgin should conceive and bear a Son. The first promise ran thus, "The seed of the woman," not the offspring of the man. Since venturous woman led the way in the sin which brought forth Paradise lost, she, and she alone, ushers in the Regainer of Paradise. Our Saviour, although truly man, was as to his human nature the Holy One of God. Let us reverently bow before the holy Child whose innocence restores to manhood its ancient glory; and let us pray that he may be formed in us, the hope of glory. Fail not to note his humble parentage. His mother has been described simply as "a virgin," not a princess, or prophetess, nor a matron of large estate. True the blood of kings ran in her veins; nor was her mind a weak and untaught one, for she could sing most sweetly a song of praise; but yet how humble her position, how poor the man to whom she stood affianced, and how miserable the accommodation afforded to the new-born King! Immanuel, God with us in our nature, in our sorrow, in our lifework, in our punishment, in our grave, and now with us, or rather we with him, in resurrection, ascension, triumph, and Second Advent splendour. - Spurgeon Morning and Evening

## ISAIAH 8

### **Isaiah 8:12–13 The Lord of Hosts, let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread.**

The land was panic-stricken for fear of the coalition of Samaria and Damascus. The politicians were seeking the alliance of Assyria, whilst the superstitious had recourse to familiar spirits and wizards. Amid the panic the voice of Isaiah is heard bidding the people fear with only one kind of fear. Not their fear, but the fear of God; not their dread, but his. The apostle Peter quotes these words, when he says, "If ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye; and fear not their fear, neither be troubled; but sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord" (1 Peter 3:15, R.V.).

On the prairies men often fight fire with fire. Against the career of the wall of flame there is but one resource; before it reaches the terrified fugitives they must light a fire to sweep the ground bare, that when the advancing horror reaches the spot there will be no fuel left for it to feed on. So with the heart of man, the only true preservation from fear of our fellows is an overmastering fear of our God. Sanctify Him in your hearts. Let Him be your fear and dread.

It is remarkable that Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac. And this appears to have quieted his heart in the presence of Laban. When the fear of God is strong, the thought of grieving Him, or incurring his just wrath and indignation, is most cogent in warning us from sin! This delivers us from all other fear. One of the greatest sentences a man can utter when tempted to sin or threatened with suffering for the uprightness of his life or the correctness of his creed, is to say simply, quietly, and strongly: "I fear God, and have no other fear." Fear Him: so shall ye be established; so shall ye prosper.. - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto the wizards, that chirp and that mutter, should not a people seek unto their God? On behalf of the living should they seek unto the dead? —Isa 8.19

These words are of tremendous import in our day. Mark well the situation. The King had refused the Divine sign. The nation had rejected the Divine policy. The prophet was commanded to seal up the testimony, that is to cease his public ministry. He was to devote himself to his spiritual children, the elect remnant loyal to Jehovah. This he did; and we have no further record of public utterance until we reach chapter 28. All now was instruction to this inner circle. In this ministry the very first word was this of solemn warning against necromancy, against spiritism, or as we now designate it spiritualism. When the voices of Divine prophecy are silent, men are ever prone to resort to this traffic with the spirit-world. Let those loyal to Jehovah beware. In a brief note we can do no more than indicate the general conception of this most exhaustive passage. There are "familiar spirits." There are mediums, those who have them, that is who communicate with them. They are wizards, and their speech is that of peeping or chirping, and muttering. That is, nothing is clear either in matter or in manner. When men are asked to "seek unto them," the answer should ever be that such seeking is, to say the least, stupid, because men may seek unto God. Why should the living turn from the living God, to seek guidance from dead spirits? Mark carefully this alternative. It is between God the living One, and spirits who are dead. Their death is spiritual; they are evil in that they are cut off from God. This is the Biblical and Christian answer to Spiritism. Those who seek after familiar spirits are those who do not seek after God. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 9

### **Isaiah 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.**

Is the government of your life upon his shoulder? In olden times the badge of office was worn there, and in some cases a key (Isaiah 22:22). It was on his shoulder that Aaron bore the names of the tribes. The shoulder is the symbol of strength. It is well when the government of our lives rests on the strong Son of God. It is a blessed day in our experience that witnesses the transference of the rule of life to the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God; because all these exalted altitudes of his nature well qualify Him to become the King and Guide of men.

The moment of definitely imposing the government upon the Lord Jesus is generally a marked one in our lives. It stands out as the first of a long series. It is the staple for a chain of successive links, because we are always increasing that government in proportion as we become more familiar with our nature and opportunities, and as new departments of our life open up before us. You were consecrated before marriage, but after you have a home of your own there is a widening of the sphere of Christ's government.

But just in proportion to the increase of his government will be the increase of your peace. As the one extends, so does the other. And he who has extended the dominion of Jesus to the furthest limits of his being, will know most of the peace that passeth understanding. There is Peace where there is Unity; where the soul has but one object to engross its love and aim; where it is able to count on the illimitable stores of its King.. - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

"Yield to the Lord, with simple heart,  
All that thou hast and all thou art!

Renounce all strength but strength divine,  
And Peace shall be for ever thine!"

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**C H SPURGEON Spurgeon's Expositions often have a devotional flavor so be sure to check out what he writes on...**

[Isaiah 9](#)

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### **Isaiah 9:1-7; 11:1-5**

And he will be called Wonderful Counselor. - Isaiah 9:6

#### TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

Throughout history, kings have relied on wise men; prime ministers have sought capable advisers; and presidents have trusted experienced cabinet members.

Today's passage points the way to an even better adviser. In the seventh century B.C., Isaiah advised Judah's king, Ahaz. During this treacherous time in the divided kingdom, Israel had formed an alliance with Syria against Assyria and sought Judah's allegiance. God used Isaiah to speak out against the alliance and to persuade Judah to put its trust in God alone. During this unstable time, God gave Isaiah astounding prophecies about the coming Messiah.

In the midst of political turmoil, God promised that one day the government of the nation and even beyond (Isa. 9:2, 3) would rest upon the stable, unwavering shoulders of an amazing Child yet to be born. This Promised One would rule with wise counsel, divine strength, the endless care of a father, and peace (Isa. 9:6, 7). For a terrified, war-weary people, there could be no better news!

Isaiah 11 provides additional descriptions of Messianic rule. Upon Him the spirit of wisdom and understanding, counsel and power (Isa 11:2) would rest. We read that "with justice, he will give decisions for the poor of the earth" (Isa 11:4).

In the incarnation of Jesus, we see the beginning of these prophecies' fulfillment. The gospels record people's amazement at the wisdom of Jesus' teaching (Luke 4:32). Everything about Him revealed the marvelous wisdom of God--the Wonderful Counselor!

Jesus understood that Isaiah's prophecies referred to Him. In Luke 4, in the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus read from the scroll of Isaiah, directly applying the prophecy to Himself (Luke 4:13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21).

After Jesus' death and resurrection, another Counselor came to be with His disciples forever--the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 17; 16:7). The Wonderful Counselor, incarnate in Jesus, now dwells within us who have put our faith in Him.

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Have you ever needed to talk to a friend about a pressing situation, but as hard as you try, you couldn't get a hold of your friend?

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### **Isaiah 9:1-7**

**To us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. - Isaiah 9:6**

#### TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

After it became obvious that the Allies' policy of appeasing Adolf Hitler had failed to stop the Nazi leader's plans for war and conquest, one British leader described the dark situation in memorable terms. ""The lamps are going out all over Europe, and we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime.""

The situation looked dark in the northern region of Israel after the Assyrians invaded in 732 B.C. and put the people under their rule. The region even came to be called ""Galilee of the Gentiles"" because of its domination by the foreigners.

But Isaiah used this dark period of Israel's history to prophesy of a time when the darkness and gloom would be lifted. That happened hundreds of years later when Jesus began His ministry in this same area--an occasion which Matthew noted by quoting from Isaiah (Matt. 4:13, 14, 15, 16).

But Isaiah did not end his prophecy with Jesus' first coming. The prophet went on to describe the day when the Messiah would carry the government of the world on His shoulders. He would be born as a child, a clear reference to Christ's birth in Bethlehem. But He would be given as a son, a gift from God because Jesus existed in eternity as God before He came to earth.

The names in Isa 9:6, like all the names we have studied this month, are impossible for anyone but God to claim. Isaiah said the

Messiah would be a "Wonderful Counselor," having exceptional wisdom. He would also be the "Mighty God," far more than a mere human being. As "Everlasting Father" Jesus is the eternal God, and He is uniquely the "Prince of Peace," the One who will bring in and maintain peace in His kingdom.

We could spend a month absorbing all the beauty and nuances of the names contained in this one verse. Imagine what it will be like to experience the fulfillment of all these roles when Jesus returns to reign!

It will happen, the prophet says, because "the zeal of God Almighty will accomplish this" (Isa 9:7). We have learned the power behind the name Almighty, which means when God is ready to send His Ruler and Savior back to earth, nothing will stop Him.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY It doesn't get any better than Jesus Christ returning to rule in perfect righteousness and peace. That will be a great day, and we can anticipate it as we celebrate His birth. But you don't have to wait until heaven to enjoy the blessings God has for you in the Person of His Son. The writer of Hebrews assures you that Jesus will never leave or forsake you (Heb. 13:5-note). That means he's with you today, no matter what your Monday holds. Praise Him!

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## Isaiah 9:1-7

**The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. Isaiah 9:2**

Legend says that candy canes had their origins in a German church's Christmas program. The choir director was annoyed with children who fidgeted during the living Nativity scene. To keep them still, he gave them white, sugar-candy sticks curved like shepherds' staffs (in keeping with the occasion). While they happily ate their candy, the living Nativity could proceed without distractions. The sweets spread to holiday programs at churches all over Europe and became one of the symbols of Christmas. When we look at candy canes, we can't help thinking about Christmas.

When we read the book of Isaiah, we also can't help thinking about Christmas. Starting today, we'll look at several prophecies from Isaiah; scholars call them messianic prophecies. The lynchpin of today's joy-filled reading is Isaiah 9:6: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given." He will be a "Wonderful Counselor," indicating wisdom and royalty; "Mighty God," associated with power and victory; "Everlasting Father," pointing to His eternal and divine origins; and "Prince of Peace," meaning that He brings peace and well-being to the earth (cf. Luke 2:14). These four titles are provocative—read carefully, they essentially equate the "son" with God Himself! As we look back, knowing that these titles belong to the Son of God, we see not mere conflation but actual identification: the Messiah as the Son of God as God.

Peace, justice, and righteousness characterize Messiah's reign (Isaiah 9:7). "Peace" is a fascinating Hebrew word, indicating more than the absence of war or inner calm. It also suggests completeness, wholeness, fullness, soundness, firmness, safety, well-being, prosperity, and contentment. Furthermore, Isaiah's prophecy was not just for Israel, but as we've already seen, God's promise is global in its vision. The "light" will dawn for Jews and Gentiles alike (Isaiah 9:2; cf. Isaiah 42:6). The child to come will sit on David's throne and rule the nations (Isaiah 9:7).

APPLY THE WORD Among the many musical treasures of Christmas, Handel's Messiah is perhaps the crown jewel. Many of its lyrics are taken straight from the book of Isaiah. As today's application, we suggest you obtain a recording of the Messiah (if you haven't already done so). Then set aside time to enjoy it—not as a background for other activities, but genuinely focusing and listening with your full attention. If you have an opportunity to attend a live performance, consider inviting an unbelieving friend to come with you.

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## Isaiah 9:1-7

**For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. - Isaiah 9:6**

### TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

Most of us are familiar with Handel's use of Isaiah 9 in his famous work, the Messiah. One of the most thrilling moments is when the choir sings, "And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

The list of names in Isaiah 9:6 is quite impressive, and can fully describe only Jesus. This prophecy of His birth can give us great encouragement today.

Isaiah has been called the "Messianic Prophet." God gave him the challenge of speaking for Him to the nation of Judah. Ahaz, one of the kings to whom Isaiah spoke, was so evil that he even sacrificed his own son to idols (see 2Kings 16:1, 2, 3).

Isaiah called his people to repent and warned what would happen if they didn't. He also prophesied of the coming of a Child, a Child



who would bring peace. In case there is any doubt who this Child is, Matthew's gospel tells us clearly that Jesus is the one who brings light in the darkness (Matt. 4:15, 16, cf. Isa 7:14; Matt. 1:22, 23).

It's worth reflecting on what Isaiah 9 tells us about Jesus. Have you ever thought of Jesus as your Wonderful Counselor? In these days of self-help books and TV therapists, we have access to the wisdom of God through Jesus.

When Jesus was born, there weren't many people who saw Him as the Mighty God—all they saw was a helpless baby. Sadly, there are still many people today who think Jesus was just a good man. Isaiah, though, is clear: He is the Mighty God.

As we saw yesterday, Jesus was present and active in Creation with the Father. The title of Everlasting Father addresses both Jesus' eternal deity as well as His compassionate care and protection of His people, like a loving father.

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Handel's Messiah is probably performed by choirs most often at this season.

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### **Isaiah 9:2-6; Philippians 4:6-7 And he will be called ... Prince of Peace. - Isaiah 9:6**

#### TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

When President Wilson signed the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, the United States had high hopes for lasting peace. Soon, however, financial tragedy and a new shadow rising over Europe threatened this fragile peace. Fifty-nine years ago today, a surprise, pre-dawn attack on Pearl Harbor shattered any hope for peace. The United States once again faced the horrors of war.

Heads of state often think of peace as the avoidance of conflict, but sin makes conflict impossible to avoid for long. The biblical idea of peace includes completeness and well-being. Such peace only comes from God. In fact, today we will see that Jesus is the embodiment of this peace (Isa. 9:6).

When Jesus was born, many recognized that God's promised peace had finally come. Following John's birth, Zechariah praised God for sending the Lord "to guide our feet into the path of peace" (Luke 1:79). Following Jesus' birth, the angels announced: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests" (Luke 2:14). Not surprisingly, one of the final things Jesus said to His disciples was "Peace be with you!" (John 20:26).

When the Prince of Peace returns in glory, He will usher in a reign of everlasting peace (Isa. 9:7). But prior to that, there are three areas in which we now have peace, even in the midst of a stressful, conflict-filled world.

First, we have peace with God (Ro 5:1-note), because we have been made right in God's sight through faith in Jesus' blood shed on the cross.

Second, we have peace in our circumstances. Jesus said, "My peace I give you" (John 14:27). Paul also wanted believers to experience "the peace of God, which transcends all understanding" (Phil. 4:7-note). Philippians exhorts us to be anxious about nothing, but to come to God with prayer and thanksgiving (Php 4:6-note). Only God's peace can "guard [our] hearts and [our] minds in Christ Jesus" (Php 4:7-note).

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Ironically, as we sing "Hail the Heaven-born Prince of Peace," the season's hectic pace may leave us far from peaceful.

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### **Isaiah 9:2-9; John 1:1-9; 8:12 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. - Isaiah 9:2**

#### TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

On July 13, 1977, a heat wave caused a blackout in New York City. In the twenty-five hours before power was finally restored, looting and vandalism inflicted \$150 million in damages on the city. What a terrifying picture of the "people walking in darkness"!

As we learned yesterday, Isaiah was writing during a tumultuous, dark time. What more joyous news could there be to people "living in the land of the shadow of death" than that a "great light" had dawned (Isa. 9:2)!

By God's mercy, this great light was even to extend beyond Judah. Isaiah later wrote that the Lord's chosen servant will be "a light for the Gentiles" (Isa. 42:6) to bring "salvation to the ends of the earth" (Isa. 49:6).

God never forgets His promises, even when several centuries pass. After Jesus' birth, His devout parents dedicated Him in the temple as was required (Luke 2:22, 23). There, Simeon, prepared by the Holy Spirit (Lk 2:26), immediately recognized Jesus as the

Great Light (Lk 2:32).

In John's gospel, where darkness always portrays the sinful world in need of salvation, Jesus is powerfully revealed as the Light of the World. Chapter 1 proclaims that Jesus is the light of men (v. 4), the "true light that gives light to every man" (Jn 1:9). Jesus Himself stated this truth in the plainest possible terms: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (Jn 8:12).

As followers of Jesus, not only do we have the light of life, but we are now the light of the world to those walking in darkness around us (Mt. 5:14-note). And our light shines as a vibrant testimony to our Father in heaven (Mt 5:16-note).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

In our modern day, it's hard to imagine walking around in complete darkness.

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**Isaiah 9:10-16 He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah. - Isaiah 11:12**

TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

Since the government of the former Soviet Union lifted its severe restrictions on Jewish emigration in the 1980s, hundreds of thousands of Jews have poured into Israel from Russia and other Soviet republics. Officials say that in 1999 alone, more than 60 (typo - ? number) Jews came to Israel from other nations. This figure includes the last members of the Jewish remnant in the nation of Ethiopia, who were airlifted to Israel last year in a dramatic rescue effort. This return is being called a "second exodus" by many of those involved in helping Jews around the world immigrate to Israel.

Whether this current wave of Jewish emigration signals a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy remains to be seen. But it is unprecedented in history since the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and the dispersion of God's chosen people.

Isaiah clearly prophesied that the Jewish people would return to the land of Israel in preparation for Messiah's coming to establish His kingdom. And the prophet did compare this great future return to Israel's Exodus from Egypt under Moses (Is 9:16).

Scripture says that God will eventually regather Israel in fulfillment of His covenant promises. The Abrahamic covenant guaranteed that the land would belong to Israel (Ge 15:18, 19, 20, 21; 17:7, 8), and God's covenant with David promised that a king from his line would forever rule on Israel's throne (2Sa 7:16).

Jesus fulfilled many of God's promises during His incarnation—He will fulfill all of them at His second coming. God will fulfill all His promises to the Church and to Israel (Romans 9-11-notes), and we can be confident that what He does will completely surpass any human expectation.

Israel will play a key role in the Messiah's kingdom. The Scripture indicates that many Jewish people will believe in Christ when He reveals Himself as Messiah (Ro 11:25-note, Ro 11; 26-note, Ro 11:27-note), and will come under the blessings of the new covenant (Jer 31:31, 32, 33, 34). The Gentile nations will also share in the joys of Messiah's kingdom.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Believers in Jesus Christ don't have to wait to enjoy the benefits of His peace.

Redemption in Christ brings us peace with God when the sin that separated us from Him is removed. The Holy Spirit's ministry brings us the peace of God, the assurance of His presence in any circumstance. God also wants us to be at peace with each other. If you are at odds with another Christian, ask God for the grace of forgiveness and reconciliation.

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**Isaiah 9:1-7 To us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. - Isaiah 9:6**

TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

Today's reading may take you back to the Christmas season. Isaiah 9:6 is one of the great Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah's first coming as the child in Bethlehem.

But this same verse ends with an entirely different picture. Here the Messiah is not viewed as a baby but as a King. In other words, the last phrase of Isaiah 9:6 is a prophecy of Messiah in His kingdom.

But these two events, Jesus' birth and His return, are already separated by more than 2000 years. And no one knows when Christ will come back to claim His kingdom. So how could Isaiah speak of Messiah's two advents in one sentence?

One explanation draws a parallel between prophecy and two mountain peaks in the distance. Both peaks are clearly visible to you, but they are lined up in such a way that they appear to be close together rather than far apart. There is actually a long valley separating the two peaks, but you can't see the valley from your vantage point.

That's the way many of the Old Testament prophets saw the future in terms of God's plan. Isaiah saw the two great peaks of Messiah's two advents, but God chose not to reveal to him the huge gap of time that separates them. We're part of that gap, because the time period we are talking about is often known as the church age.

Paul said the fact that Jews and Gentiles would be united in one new body was a mystery (Eph. 3:3, 4, 5, 6<sup>note</sup>), a truth not previously revealed before it was given to Paul.

Neither Isaiah nor any other Old Testament prophet knew all the details of the prophetic plan they were recording. This explains why Isaiah 9 contains elements of Christ's first and second comings together in one narrative.

In addition to Jesus' birth, Isaiah prophesied the impact of His ministry in bringing light to people in darkness. The prophet also pinpointed Galilee as the place where Messiah's ministry would be concentrated (Isa 9:2, cf. Mt. 4:15, 16).

But the joy, liberation, and peace prophesied by Isaiah remind us of Christ's return in glory. Isaiah saw the peaks, the high points. We are privileged to have a more complete revelation in God's Word.

**TODAY ALONG THE WAY** Think about the trustworthiness of God's revelation to us. Prophets like Isaiah faithfully recorded the message they were given by the Holy Spirit. They relayed God's message accurately as it was given to them, even when they didn't understand it or wondered how their prophecies would be fulfilled. Now we have the Bible, God's Word we can trust completely. Take time to thank God for His wonderful Word.

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### **Isaiah 9:8-10:34; Isaiah 10:12-19 Does the ax raise itself above him who swings it, or the saw boast against him who uses it? Isaiah 10:15**

Imagine your computer talking back to you. No, not just popping up with annoying dialogue boxes or mysterious system errors, but actually talking back to you. Telling you what to write in your word processing software. Redoing the numbers in your spreadsheet. Arguing with you about what Web sites to visit. How long would you endure such a computer before unplugging it and chucking it out with the trash? Not long!

A similar idea is part of the background for today's reading. Tools don't talk back to craftsmen, yet after the sovereign God used Assyria as an instrument of judgment, that nation would "talk back" and act as if they had accomplished everything by their own strength and ability. How long would God stand for such arrogance? Not long!

God chose Assyria as a tool with which to discipline and punish Israel. He was angry with His people because of the nation's faithlessness and idolatry. Despite various warnings, the people refused to return to the Lord, ignored their covenant obligations, and continued on in pride and self-sufficiency. Far from the stereotype that the God of the Old Testament was vengeful and spiteful, we read here of how many opportunities He gave them to change their ways, and of how blatantly and hardheartedly they rejected Him. His judgment of conquest by Assyria aimed to cleanse the nation of social injustice and oppression, of which the leaders and false prophets were particularly guilty.

Yet in time the Assyrians too would be ripe for judgment. They too would become proud, imagining that they had won their military victories and empire by their own power and wisdom. The Lord would correct that attitude, and the Assyrian army would be cut down like trees in the forest (Isaiah 10:33-34). During all of this, He would remain the same—sovereign and faithful. That's why a remnant of Israel would be preserved and would one day return to the land (Isaiah 10:20-21).

**APPLY THE WORD** Are you an Assyrian? That is, do you have an Assyrian attitude about your accomplishments and achievements? At one point in today's reading, we see the Assyrians congratulating themselves for what they thought they had done in their own strength and by their own abilities. "It was as easy as gathering eggs from a henhouse," they gloated (Isaiah 10:13-14). How about you? Is this uncomfortably close to things you've said? Or do you give all the credit and glory to the Lord? If not, resolve to begin doing so today.

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The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this.—Isa 9.7

If the first note of the prophet's teaching of his spiritual children was one of warning against necromancy; the seeking after dead spirits, that is, those cut off from God; the second, immediately following, was one which described a great and glorious deliverance. These words end that description: "The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this!" They are arresting words. Isaiah employed them

again (Isaiah 37.32). The same idea is found in Joel 2.18: "Then was Jehovah jealous for His land, and had pity on His people"; and in Zechariah 1.14: "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy"; and (Zech 8.2) : "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath." The words zeal and jealousy are identical in the Hebrew. It is a word which stands for passion, and is used in many different ways. When predicated of Jehovah it invariably refers to His anger against that which destroys those whom He loves. It is therefore an anger, love-inspired. This is the force which brings deliverance. The prophet in this message foretold the overthrow of the enemies of the people of God, the destruction of all the implements of war, and declared that this final deliverance would come through "a child born...a son given." He would establish the true Kingdom. Then he told the way of this mighty deliverance. It would come to pass by the zeal of Jehovah. We live after the advent of this Child, this Son; and we are living while He reigns; "for He must reign till He hath put all His enemies under His feet." Let us rest assured of His victory, because "The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will pc dorm this." - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 10

### Isaiah 10:15 Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith?

The Assyrian thought that he was acting on his own impulse, and in his pride congratulated himself on his exploits. The prophet reminded him that it was not so. He was only an axe, a saw, a rod, in the hand of the Eternal God whose supremacy he was inclined to challenge and set at nought.

This thought underlay the apostle's reply to those who magnified him against Apollos or Cephas. What are we, he cries, but ministers through whom ye believed, even as God granted to each of us? We are only instruments of God's husbandry, implements through which He fulfils his plans (1 Corinthians 3). It dates an era in the life, when we cease to work for God, and allow God to work through us.

Thoughts like these correct alike pride and despondency. Pride, because whatever is the result of our work, we can no more take the credit of it than the pen that wrote the "Paradise Lost" could take to itself the credit of its production. At the best, it is not you, but the grace of God that was with you. You are only a pipe in the organ, but the breath that educed your music was divine. And in despondency it is very helpful to remember that if we are nothing, God is all-sufficient; if we have failed, it is the more needful for Him to exert more power. Throw back the responsibility of all results on God. Only see to it that you are a polished shaft, an unblunted saw, and leave Him to do through you what He will.. - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

"So, take and use thy work!

Amend what flaws may lurk,

What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim!

My times are in thy hand!

Perfect the cup as plann'd!

Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same!"

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Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? Shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? As if a rod should shake them that lift it up, or as if a staff should lift up him that is not wood.—Isa 10.15

In these words we have the language of one who sees the whole world under the Divine government. They must be interpreted in the light of the opening words of this particular message (see verse 5). "Ho, Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger; the staff in whose hand is Mine indignation." Call to mind the political situation. The Nation, under the influence of Ahaz, was looking toward Assyria for help. The prophet instructing his spiritual children, declared that Assyria would be an instrument in the hand of God to scourge His people. This he declared in this oracle, and then proceeded to describe dramatically the arrogance of Assyria, who does not recognize the Divine purpose, but has it in his heart to destroy (verse 7). Over against that intention of Assyria, is the intention of Jehovah, Who, when His work is accomplished on Zion and Jerusalem, will punish Assyria for its arrogance. Thus the prophet saw all these nations in the hands of God. For the punishment of His own guilty people, Assyria is His rod and staff; but Assyria can go no further than the fulfilment of the Divine purpose. The light of this teaching falls upon modern conditions as clearly as upon this ancient history. God is still the God of all the nations, even when they fail to recognize Him, or even boast themselves against Him. He will use their power to accomplish His purpose, and then destroy it. The axe is ever in His hand; the saw is doing His work. What folly for either, to boast against Him. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 11

Isaiah 11:3 And he shall be of quick scent in the fear of the Lord. (R.V., marg.).

Quick of scent! This is the prerogative of all who have received the fullness of the Holy Spirit. We all know the great advantage of having a keen scent. Those who can instantly detect an ill-odor are saved from going into places where pestilence and fever lurk in ambush for life. The whiff of ill-odor startles the unwary passer-by, and warns him that influences inimical to health are brooding nigh. Thus he is arrested and saved.

It is a blessed thing when a man's spiritual senses are exercised to discriminate between the good and bad, the healthy and unhealthy, in literature, amusements, fellowship, and many of the questionable or doubtful things which professing Christians permit. There are many of these which appear innocent enough, like some deadly spot of a jungle where miasma and fever breed; but the deadly scent of corruption will instantly be detected by the Spirit-taught spirit, and the child of God, whose senses are exercised to distinguish between good and evil.

The sense of smell is greatly quickened by inhaling pure air, full of ozone and health, such as breathes about the mountain-brow or the ocean wave. If we return from such scenes, we are more sensitive than ever to foul odors. Live with God's Spirit in holy fellowship, so will you become spiritually quick of scent.

The Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that our senses become quick to distinguish between good and evil by reason of use (Hebrews 5:14). In the first stages of Christian living, temptation may have stolen in upon, and mastered us before we were aware of its presence. But, as years pass, and we become mature through feeding on the meat of the Gospel we become "quick." - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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**Isaiah 11:1-9** The earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. - Isaiah 11:9

#### TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

George Frideric Handel wrote his famous oratorio Messiah under adverse conditions. His eyesight was failing, and he was under the threat of going to debtor's prison because of unpaid bills. But despite these pressures, Handel wrote his work in three weeks, compelled by an overwhelming sense of joy. He said he felt as if his heart would burst with joy over the music he was hearing in his mind.

The inspiration Handel felt as he wrote the Messiah helps to explain its impact on listeners and performers. It's hard to sing the "Hallelujah Chorus" without imagining what it will be like when Jesus Christ returns to reign "for ever and ever."

The prophet Isaiah peels back the corner of Christ's **Millennial Kingdom** give us a glimpse into the future. Many of the images in today's reading are embraced even by those people who believe that world peace can be achieved by negotiations.

But the Bible never offers peace without the Prince of Peace. A world at peace will not just magically appear someday. Earth's golden age will only arrive when this world comes under the direct reign of the Messiah, the "Branch" from the line of Jesse (David's father).

The requirements for this King (Isa 11:2, 3, 4, 5) cannot be met by any ordinary ruler, either in history or yet to come. Only Jesus Christ can claim the perfect fullness of the Holy Spirit as described by the prophet. Jesus alone is capable of judging righteously in every case, because He is perfect in righteousness. And no other ruler has the power to bring about worldwide judgment against evil.

Paul tells us that all of creation is groaning under the curse of sin, waiting eagerly for the day when God's judgment will be lifted (Ro 8:19, 20, 21, 22-notes). Isaiah reveals what will happen when creation is transferred from the dominion of Satan to its rightful owner and ruler.

The scenes portrayed here are almost beyond the imagination. In the second half of the chapter Isaiah turns his attention from the natural world to the nations. That will be our study tomorrow.

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Christ rules today as Lord and King in the lives of His people. Since we have the King, we also enjoy His blessings. One example is the Holy Spirit's ministry, as outlined in Isaiah 11:2. The Spirit who indwells us brings all the wisdom, counsel, power, and knowledge of God into our lives. Our response is to "be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:1-note). Come to the Lord with an open heart today and ask for the increase of the Holy Spirit's revelation and power in your life.

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#### **Isaiah 11:6 LED BY A LITTLE CHILD.**

It may be, dear friend, that you are in trouble. If so, I pray that your affliction may be the black horse that mercy rides to your door. It is a sad, sad thing that the better the Lord deals with some people the worse they are. On the other hand, there are hearts that turn to the Lord when He afflicts them. When they drift into deep waters, when they can scarcely find bread to eat, when sickness attacks

their bodies, and especially when their children are afflicted, they begin to think of God. Blessed is the discipline of the great Father in these cases. It is well for the troubled if trials bruise their hearts to repentance, for repentance leads them to seek and find pardon. We read of a royal official's affliction (John 4:46–53). His child, a little boy whom he dearly loved, was sick with a deadly fever. No doubt he had tried all the known remedies and had sent for every physician that could be found. Then he heard of Jesus of Nazareth, who at Cana had turned the water into wine (John 2:9) and who had done many mighty works (John 21:25). In desperate hope and with eager petition, this royal official seeks Jesus. He might never have thought of seeking Jesus had it not been for his dear dying boy. It often happens that children do better work than angels accomplish, because they lead their parents to God and heaven.

Children wrap themselves around our hearts, and when we see their pain we are full of anguish. We cry, "God, spare my child! Lord, have mercy on my little one." The first prayers of many are brought by grief over dearly loved little ones. Is it not written, "a little child shall lead them" (Is. 11:6)?

So it was with this official. He was brought to Jesus by trouble, by anxiety over a child. He was brought to Jesus' mercy by affliction. - C H Spurgeon - "Beside Still Waters"

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## **Isaiah 11:1-5**

### **Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. - Isaiah 11:5**

#### TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

Months of promises, posturing, and political maneuvering come to an end today as another election day goes into the history books for our country.

The integrity of leaders has been an almost constant debate in America this year.

It reminds us once again how important integrity is in leadership, and the damage that is done when leaders are faithless in their responsibilities.

But no amount of scandal and failure can obscure the fact that we are still called upon to elect faithful and responsible leaders. God's requirement for "those who have been given a trust" is that they prove faithful to that trust (1Cor. 4:2). We can praise God that there are many faithful people serving at all levels of government and public service.

Nevertheless, this Election Day is a good opportunity to step back to get an eternal perspective. God's promise to bring righteousness to the earth will never be fully realized by any human ruler. And although no one executes the responsibilities of leadership perfectly, one day this earth will be ruled by a leader who can perfectly fulfill God's requirements--because He is God Himself.

Isaiah 11 is a picture of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will take His rightful place as Ruler of the earth in His millennial kingdom. This description is both awe-inspiring and encouraging. Finally, all the earth will be ruled in absolute righteousness.

God is a faithful judge who never perverts justice or subverts righteousness. So the Messiah's kingdom reign will be characterized by perfection in these areas. Sin will be judged quickly and decisively by one who is not hampered in His judgment by the limitations that plague all systems of government.

When Jesus takes His throne, God's faithfulness will be as visible as if Christ were wearing it around His waist (Isa 11:5). Looking ahead to that glorious day gives us another reason to thank the Lord for His faithfulness. It also keeps us from placing our ultimate hope in the outcome of any election.

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

While we listen for the results of today's election, we can praise God that His "election results" have been in for all eternity. In light of all that has happened in government this year, you may be tempted to become despairing or cynical about the entire political process and the institutions of government. But God's requirement of faithfulness applies to us as well. Let's be faithful to pray for the leaders who are elected today, and for their colleagues who will serve alongside them at every level of government.

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## **Isaiah 11:1-9; Isaiah 11-12**

### **A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. Isaiah 11:1**

In The Magician's Nephew, one of the Chronicles of Narnia by C. S. Lewis, the lion Aslan sent the children Digory and Polly to a garden on a mountain to get a branch and apple from a special tree. In their journey, they resisted the temptation to steal one of the apples, which gave long life, for Digory's mother, who was dying back in England. They returned to Aslan, who asked Digory to plant

the apple by a river. The tree that grew from that fruit and branch protected Narnia for many years from a wicked witch, and Aslan gave Digory an apple for his mother as well. She was miraculously healed by eating it!

Today's reading also deals with a powerful and healing Branch—the Root and Branch of David. This is a continuation of the picture of trees getting chopped down, meaning the military defeat of nations. In the future, Israel and Judah will be reduced to a “stump” ... but from that stump will grow a Branch. A remnant will remain. Conquest and exile won't mean the end of God's covenant with Israel. In the long run, this Branch from the line of David would be the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

What about the Messiah? Filled by the Spirit, He will delight in worshiping God. He will judge truthfully and righteously in favor of those society neglects. He will be powerful and clothed in covenant faithfulness. His reign will be characterized by universal peace (11:6–9). As the Final Word from God Himself, He will fill the earth with the knowledge of the Lord. In these verses, the relatively near future of the nation's return from exile is juxtaposed with the far future of Messiah's comings.

Isaiah 12 has two brief psalms of praise in response to these prophecies. The first focuses on gratitude for God's mercy and salvation (Isa 12:1–3). The second moves from the restored relationship with God to proclaiming His name among the nations (Isa 12:4–6).

**APPLY THE WORD** The **Messiah's Millennial Kingdom** will be a utopia. Utopia means “perfect place.” Throughout human history, people have longed for a perfect society and tried to imagine how it might be built. They've written about it in utopian literature, which often shows that unredeemed human nature isn't up to the task. If this sounds interesting, you could read a work of utopian literature. Classic possibilities include *Utopia*, by Thomas More; *The Blithedale Romance*, by Nathaniel Hawthorne; and *Lost Horizon*, by James Hilton.

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He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears.—Isa. 11.3

After the oracle foretelling the destruction of Assyria, and, by implication, of all the enemies of the Nation, the prophet uttered to that inner circle of faithful souls this matchless prediction of the Messianic Kingdom. He described the character of Messiah, revealed the methods of His government, gave a glowing description of the results of His reign, and told of how the scattered people would be gathered from the four corners of the earth. These words occur in the midst of the revelation of the methods of government, and they are certainly among the most marvellously arresting things ever said about that great Kingdom of heaven which is yet to be. Their arresting nature is realized when the conception of government and decision is compared with the highest and best methods existing among men. All human laws are made and administered as the result of what men see with their eyes and hear with their ears; and that because man in his dealing with other men has no other means of knowledge. These laws break down, and justice goes astray, because what the eyes see often misleads, and what the ears hear is not true, or is not all the truth. But in the kingdom of God, government is based upon absolute knowledge, and decisions are the result of perfect understanding. Not alone the deed evident to sight, or the word caught by hearing, but the motive of the deed, the intention of the word, will be known by Him, God's anointed and appointed King, Himself being human, a Child born to us; and Divine, a Son given. Nothing more than this one sentence need be uttered to prove the glory of that reign, or to possess us with a burning passion to hasten its coming. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 12

### **Isaiah 12:3 With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.**

Salvation in wells. It is a fascinating picture. We remember Elim, for instance, where were twelve springs of water. In Jesus there are wells of salvation and blessedness. Do you want Sympathy? Draw it from his tears. Courage? It resides in our Coeur-de-Lion, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Purity? It is his life-blood. Peace? He is the Prince of Peace, the Son of Peace. Meekness? He is meek and lowly in heart. Mercifulness? In Him you will obtain it. Prayerfulness? It is his prime characteristic. There is no quality or grace of the soul which has not its well of supply in the Divine Manhood of our Lord.

But we must draw. Thou hast something to draw with, though not to the eye of man. Faith is the bucket, which we let down into the fullness of the Divine supply. Not simply the general belief that God does answer prayer, but the specific and particular belief that God has answered the prayer for some special needed grace; and that it is yours. Believe that ye have received. Do not look into the dripping bucket of your faith to see if you have received; dare to believe that you have received whether you get it or not; and go forth to use what you have, sure that in answer to your appeal you have all sufficiency in all things, that you may abound to every good work.

What joy! There is always joy in some new discovery and acquisition. And oh, the joy of realizing that all the wealth of God's salvation is within our reach; that we may draw for ever without fear of exhaustion; that the Spirit and Bride invite us to end for

## Isaiah 12:1-6

The Lord, the Lord, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. - Isaiah 12:2

### TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

After winning many trophies and awards, tennis player Michael Chang lost the 1992 French Open and Wimbledon. he knew something was wrong, and discussed with his family the reason for the change in his playing: they hadn't been praying before each game like they had in the beginning.

""We then vowed to work as a team to praise God, to focus on Him, to worship Him, to thank Him, and to learn from Him,"" Chang says. ""We took that preparation and mentality into the U.S. Open, and although I didn't win, we came away feeling that it was a success and that God's work was done.""

Isaiah, too, knew the importance of praising God. Today's passage teaches us that true prayer to the Father begins with praise and thanksgiving.

The context of today's reading is prophetic, taking place during the millennial reign of Jesus Christ. Isaiah is picturing the coming of the Messiah to redeem His people and establish His glorious reign. We know this future period as the millennial kingdom spoken of in Revelation 20:1, 2, 3-note, Re 20:4, 5, 6, 7-note. Notice the phrase ""in that day,"" repeated at the beginning of each stanza (Isa. 12:1, 4).

The first three verses are the praise and gratitude of ""the remnant of His people,"" Israel (see Isa. 11:16). Isa 12:4, 5, 6 are the praise of ""the nations,"" the Gentiles. In that day when Christ sits on His throne, the redeemed of both groups-those who make up His body, the church (Eph. 2:11, 12-note, Ep 2:13, 14-note, Ep 2:15, 16-note, Ep 2:17, 18-note)-will reign with Him.

But we don't have to wait until Christ returns to offer Him the praise He deserves. Praise and adoration of God is the ""sacrifice of praise"" we are called to give to Him (Heb. 13:15-note).

Isaiah 12 may be prophetic, but the attributes of God and the ""glorious things"" mentioned in these verses are true for us today. For example, we can ""trust and not be afraid"" (Isa 11:2) because God is our salvation. And we can ""draw water from His wells""-that is, enjoy the full benefits of His salvation.

Praise is a great way to keep your prayers from falling into the ""gimme"" mentality. God loves to give, but He also delights to hear our praise.

### TODAY ALONG THE WAY -

"Sing to the Lord," Isaiah urges (Isa 11:5). if your devotions don't include some music along the way, you have a whole new realm of worship open to you. Singing hymn of praise or gratitude to the Lord during your prayer time is as natural as speaking to Him. Try it today with a hymn or a chorus that God brings to mind. Or sing as a family for a touch of variety, or in place of the prayer at your next meal together.

### Music...

- [Holiness - Micah Stampley](#) or [Try here](#)
  - [Blessed Be Your Name Matt Redman \(Alternate version\)](#)
  - [Hide Me In Your Holiness - a beautiful old Maranatha chorus](#)
  - [When I Look Into Your Holiness](#)
  - [How Deep The Father's Love For Us - Fernando Ortega](#)
  - [We Fall Down \(We Cry Holy, Holy, Holy Is the Lord\) - Chris Tomlin](#)
  - [Mighty To Save - Laura Story](#)
  - [I Can Only Imagine - Mercy Me](#)
  - [Holy, Holy, Holy](#)
  - [Praise to the Lord the Almighty](#)
  - [Praise to the Lord the Almighty - Fernando Ortega \(recommended!\)](#)
  - [Give Me Jesus - Sing as Your Prayer to the Holy One of Israel \(recommended\)](#)
  - [Indescribable - Chris Tomlin](#) // [Indescribable - Laura Story](#)
  - [How great is our God - Chris Tomlin](#)
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## Isaiah 12:1-6

The formal transfer of Hong Kong from British to Chinese control this past July 1 marked the culmination of a long-anticipated process. The transfer was agreed upon between Britain and China in 1984, giving the island nation's people thirteen years to prepare for the change in government. For the Chinese government and Chinese communities around the world, July 1 lived up to its advance billing, the hand-over being accompanied by great pomp and celebration. Those who witnessed the ceremony will no doubt remember it for a long time.

There's another great "transfer of power" coming to this earth. It has been eagerly anticipated for thousands of years, and its arrival will fulfill all of its advance notices to the exact detail. It will be a time of celebration--and worship.

We are talking about the return of Christ to usher in His thousand-year kingdom from His throne in Jerusalem. God gave the prophet Isaiah a wonderful glimpse into that future day, and in today's reading we share Isaiah's joy.

This brief but important chapter is a two-stanza hymn of praise to God. In it, His Messianic King, Jesus Christ, has finally taken His throne. This gives us a foretaste of the worship we will experience when Jesus sets up His kingdom on earth.

The people speaking God's praise are the remnant of Israel, redeemed by God's mighty hand and enjoying the blessings of the Messiah's righteous rule in His millennial kingdom. In Isa 12:1, 2, 3, the remnant praises and worships God for the great salvation He has accomplished for His people.

Then in Isa 12:4, 5, 6, the **remnant** calls on all the people of the earth to join them in worship and exaltation of God. The arrival of God's long-promised kingdom will vindicate His great name before every nation. The only proper response to the "glorious things" God has done and will do in the **Millennium**: offer Him thanks, sing His praises, and shout aloud for joy (Isa 12:4, 5, 6).

### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Imagine one thousand years spent worshipping our wonderful Savior and King! It will take that long to even begin expressing our gratitude for our salvation. And the Millennium is just the beginning. When we are in heaven, our praise and worship will never cease (see tomorrow's study). Since that's the case, we had better be practicing worship as a way of life down here!

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## Isaiah 12

### Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you. Isaiah 12:6

The book of Esther contains one of many great rescue stories in the Bible. A prideful official in the imperial Persian court plotted the murder of all Jews. God, however, had placed a Jewish woman named Esther in the position of queen, though no one at court was aware of her ethnic identity. At a key moment, in a daring step of faith, Esther revealed her identity and the evil plot against her people to the king, who issued decrees encouraging the Jews to defend themselves. A day of intended genocide became instead a day of salvation, joy, feasting, and celebration (Esther 8:15–17; 9:16–28). Known as Purim, it remains a festive celebration to this day.

Joy is found in God's rescue and deliverance, as we've seen already this month. That's what the prophet Isaiah wrote about in today's reading as well. These two short psalms (Isaiah 12:1–3 and Isaiah 12:4–6) are seen by many commentators as a worshipful conclusion to Isaiah 7 through Isaiah 11. These chapters deal with God's protection of Israel based on His covenant with David, as well as His judgments on the sin of Israel and Assyria and the coming of His kingdom. The overall themes are God's just and loving control of history and His care for His people.

Specifically, the first psalm acknowledges the justice of God's judgment, but even more, Isaiah rejoiced in the miracle of God's forgiveness and the restoration of the covenant relationship. The core truth is that God is our salvation, strength, and song (Isaiah 12:2; see Ex. 15:2). The core response is fearless trust. The core image is "wells of salvation," from which we draw spiritual life and rejoice in His goodness to us (Isaiah 12:3; cf. John 4:10–14).

The second psalm is essentially a list of actions, framed as imperative verbs. That is, hearers are called to give thanks, to worship, to pray, and to witness. God's character and actions fill our hearts to overflowing with joy—we cannot help but sing and shout!

### APPLY THE WORD

Do you have a personal hymnbook? A personal collection of favorite Christian songs might be low-tech—a three-ring binder full of photocopied pages. It might be high-tech—a special playlist on your mp3 player. It might be personal, music for you and God alone. It might be a group compilation done by your family or small group. In any case, the purpose of a personal hymnbook is to "Sing to the Lord, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world" (Isaiah 12:5).

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Cry aloud and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.—Isa. 12.6

The connection of this song of chapter twelve with the Messianic foretellings in chapter eleven is indicated by the introductory words: "And in that day thou shalt say." The song itself is in two movements. In the first (verses 1 and 2) the singer is the personified nation praising the God through Whom her salvation has been wrought. In the second (verses 3-6) the prophet in glad exultation addresses the nation thus delivered. These words constitute the final note in this movement, and set forth the chief reason for the strength of the city, and the joy of the people. It is that the One Who is great in the midst of her is holy. That is the fundamental note in the Kingdom and City of God, and thus it stands in contrast with all the false ideas of greatness which have blighted and blasted the kingdoms of men. In the midst of human kingdoms which for a time have seemed to be strong, but which have perished, have been those counted great because of military prowess, of diplomatic acumen, of economic shrewdness. None of these is sufficient to create stability or insure permanence. In the midst of the City of God, the Kingdom of Heaven, the Great One is the Holy One. That separation from evil will insure the victory of His warfare, the triumph of His diplomacy, the perfection of His economy. Therefore His City and Kingdom will be stable, and permanent, having no end. That, therefore, is the supreme note in the song that celebrates His reign, and His people's salvation. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 13

### **Isaiah 13:19 And Babylon shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.**

These prophecies have been fulfilled with marvelous accuracy. It is a pity that so few of our young people in these days study the evidence of prophecy. "Keith's Evidences" would be a wholesome introduction to this marvelous field of investigation; but every year is adding to the store of proof. Unlike the evidence of miracles, that of prophecy increases with every year of increasing distance from the hour that the prediction was given.

There is a God that judgeth in the earth. Nations, as well as individuals, must stand before his judgment bar. Indeed, the judgment of the nations is now in progress. Already before the Son of Man all nations are being gathered, and He is dividing the sheep from among the goats. Men do not see the sentence of the Divine Judge put into execution, since the operation of his Providence is so deliberate. But in the landscape of history, as we view it from the eminence of the years, we can detect the condign vengeance of the Almighty on the cruel, rapacious, bloodthirsty kingdom of Babylon. She had served God's purpose, but she had committed such enormous crimes in the process of serving it, that she must be condemned.

The wrongs of the West Indians have, in this generation, been requited upon Spain. It is not possible that modern Turkey should escape. The blood of 100,000 Armenians cries against her from order the altar. But let our beloved country beware! Her opium traffic, her connivance at the sale of firewater to native races, her permission of gross impurity in her streets, her drunkenness, must be telling very heavily against her in the scale of Divine justice. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" . - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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The Lord of hosts mustereth the host for the battle.—Isa 13.4

With this chapter we begin a section of the prophecy which includes and ends with chapter twenty-three. It consists of ten burdens concerning the nations, and one concerning Jerusalem. These are all to be conceived of as having been delivered to that inner circle of faithful souls, among whom in this period the prophet was exercising his ministry. The value of them as a whole lay in the 'prophet's presentation of God as governing all the nations. Amos, prophesying in Samaria, was influenced by the same outlook. An understanding of this would reveal most clearly the folly of looking for national safety in alliances with any of these, while neglecting the government of God, and refusing to ask or to act upon His signs. The first of these oracles (Isa 13-14.27) unquestionably had to do with Assyria, the people toward whom Ahaz was looking for help. This is clear from internal evidence notwithstanding the inscription "The burden of Babylon," due probably to the mistake of a copyist, or more likely to some subsequent adaptation of the message to Babylon (Isa 14.4). The message in its entirety is a description of the overthrow of this cruel and proud and relentless power, by the might of Jehovah. Hosts are seen to gather against this grim nation which has held the world in thrall, and the words we have emphasized give the word of prophetic interpretation of that gathering: "Jehovah of hosts is mustering the host for the battle." This is the authentic note of the prophet. While men discuss war in the terms of human diplomacies, he passes beyond secondary causes, as he sees the Throne never vacant. To him it is Jehovah Who musters the host for battle. Our watching eyes have looked upon modern events in which the same fact has been patent. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 14

## Isaiah 14:12-15

### TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

The once-famous flying feet have been reduced to a painful shuffle, struggling to obey a mind that has absorbed too many blows in too many boxing matches.

Muhammad Ali, "The Champ," was once the most famous athlete in the world. Today the man who often boasted, "I am the greatest," suffers from Parkinson's disease. The fighter who bragged of what he would do to each opponent looked back at his life and said, "I had the world, and it wasn't nuthin'."

With that self-assessment, Muhammad Ali joined a long line of kings and queens and champions and captains of industry whose prideful boasts have been short-lived. We remember Ali's arrogant speeches of the 1960s, but self-asserting pride was not born in the locker room of a boxing tournament. It originated in heaven, with Lucifer.

Today's verses are the end of an oracle against Babylon that begins in Isaiah 13:1f. Although the rulers of Babylon were as prideful and arrogant as any on earth, the writer points to another prideful being. Beginning in Isa 14:12, he writes of the "morning star," a term translated as "Lucifer" in the Latin version of the Bible.

This "morning star" is Satan, the once-beautiful angel who wanted to exalt himself above God. His five "I will" boasts outline his plot to claim the power and glory of God for himself. But God did not tolerate Satan's arrogance: "Your heart became proud...So I threw you to the earth" (Ezek 28:17). Satan's prideful rebellion changed the course of human history in the Garden of Eden.

There the former "morning star," now eating the dust of the earth as a serpent, tempted Eve with the same sin. He tempted her with the same prideful desire for God's power that had led to his own downfall (Ge 3:1, 2, 3, 4, 5). This interaction between Satan and Eve centered around pride. It planted in human hearts that fierce rebellion of spirit that says, "I will be my own god."

### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

If pride is that insidious and persistent, and it is, then we need to learn to deal with it on a daily basis. James 4:13, 14, 15, 16, 17 is a great place to start. James' concern is with "today or tomorrow" (Jas 4:13), so this is no one-shot deal. Since the primary manifestation of pride is the "I will" syndrome, we need to change wills! Jas 4:15 seems like a small shift in emphasis, but bowing to God's sovereignty in our lives is a daily antidote to arrogance.

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**C H SPURGEON Spurgeon's Expositions often have a devotional flavor so be sure to check out what he writes on...**

[Isaiah 14](#)

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#### **Isaiah 14:1 The Lord will have compassion on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel.**

Israel is the pivot around which the history of the world revolves. We cannot understand the trend of events till we know this. As it was in the days of Isaiah, so it is now. Then the rise and fall of Babylon was conditioned by the history of the people whom her kings so greatly despised. Israel needed punishment, and Babylon was raised up to be the rod of God's vengeance. The precious truths entrusted to Israel needed dissemination throughout the world, and the chosen people were carried captive to Babylon and scattered throughout that vast empire. When seventy years were fulfilled, and the time was ripe for their restoration to their own land, Babylon fell beneath the Medes and Persians, and Cyrus signed the edict for the restoration of Israel. **So, now, it is hardly a matter of doubt that the existing complications of Eastern Europe will never be settled until the chosen people recover the land given by covenant-promise to Abraham, and establish there a free and independent kingdom.** But the practical lesson is, that God bears his people on his heart, and that He is ever engaged in manipulating and governing human affairs for their welfare. He hates putting away. He must keep his promises made to us in Jesus. O backslider, what comfort for thee is here! Israel had surely done her worst to alienate the love of God, and to put herself out of his loving favor. But see how He had compassion and chose her again. Take heart! He will restore thee, as at the first, and bless thee, setting thee again in the old place of favor and privilege. "Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts." . - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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#### **Isaiah 14:12-20; Isaiah 13:1-14:27**

#### **How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! Isaiah 14:12**

In John's apocalyptic vision of the end times, "Babylon" is a name symbolizing pride and godlessness. For example, "Babylon the Great" is written on the forehead of the adulterous woman on the beast, who is "drunk with the blood of the saints." It is also a city, either a literal city or a "city" symbolizing the entire world system, but in either interpretation it does not worship the Lord and

pursues its own benefit and pleasure above all. Because of its pride and godlessness, Babylon is condemned: "Woe! Woe, O great city, O Babylon, city of power! In one hour your doom has come!" (Rev. 17–18).

Today's reading begins a long section of Isaiah in which nations are judged for their pride, starting with the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires. A larger theme here is that God is sovereign over the destinies of nations. Furthermore, these judgments prove God's justice—though pagan nations may be used as tools, their own evil will not go unpunished. These chapters were also intended to comfort Israel on the eve of her own judgment, as well as to reveal the consistent and uncompromising holiness of God's character.

Though the empire might appear unassailable, God will muster an army and bring a "day of the Lord" which will be fearful and overwhelming. Arrogance will be laid low (Isaiah 13:11). In Isaiah 14:12–15, we see behind the pride of Babylon the archetypal pride of Satan. He desired to be like the Most High, and still does—to his inevitable doom. Though he was once "Lucifer," a "morning star" exalted among the angels, he was cast down for his self-idolatrous pride. In a very real sense, Satan was the power behind the throne of Babylon.

Yet against the Lord such pride cannot stand. It must fall. "For the Lord Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?" (Isaiah 14:27).

APPLY THE WORD Isaiah 13–23 is essentially a series of woes or judgments upon the nations of Isaiah's day. It might be interesting to compare Jesus' seven woes upon the Pharisees in Matthew 23. What are some of the similarities and differences between the two sets of judgments? For instance, which sins are singled out for special condemnation? What similarities can be found among the metaphors and word-pictures used about evil and judgment? What lessons can be drawn from the two passages for those who seek righteousness?

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#### **Isaiah 14:10 "Art thou become like unto us?"**

What must be the apostate professor's doom when his naked soul appears before God? How will he bear that voice, "Depart, ye cursed; thou hast rejected me, and I reject thee; thou hast played the harlot, and departed from me: I also have banished thee for ever from my presence, and will not have mercy upon thee." What will be this wretch's shame at the last great day when, before assembled multitudes, the apostate shall be unmasked? See the profane, and sinners who never professed religion, lifting themselves up from their beds of fire to point at him. "There he is," says one, "will he preach the gospel in hell?" "There he is," says another, "he rebuked me for cursing, and was a hypocrite himself!" "Aha!" says another, "here comes a psalm-singing Methodist—one who was always at his meeting; he is the man who boasted of his being sure of everlasting life; and here he is!" No greater eagerness will ever be seen among Satanic tormentors, than in that day when devils drag the hypocrite's soul down to perdition. Bunyan pictures this with massive but awful grandeur of poetry when he speaks of the back-way to hell. Seven devils bound the wretch with nine cords, and dragged him from the road to heaven, in which he had professed to walk, and thrust him through the back-door into hell. Mind that back-way to hell, professors! "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." Look well to your state; see whether you be in Christ or not. It is the easiest thing in the world to give a lenient verdict when oneself is to be tried; but O, be just and true here. Be just to all, but be rigorous to yourself. Remember if it be not a rock on which you build, when the house shall fall, great will be the fall of it. O may the Lord give you sincerity, constancy, and firmness; and in no day, however evil, may you be led to turn aside. - Spurgeon Morning and Evening

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#### **Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:11-19**

The famous story of how gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill in California in 1848, triggering the great California gold rush, is a familiar one to many people. What is not as well-known is that the discovery, made on January 24, 1848, occurred just nine days before Mexico formally ceded the California territory to the United States. The transaction was part of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that ended a war between Mexico and the United States.

Even though Mexico possessed great riches when it possessed California, the Mexican government had to yield the territory. Mexico was a defeated foe. In much the same way, the angel Lucifer had to surrender his heavenly glory after leading a rebellion in heaven against the rule of God Himself.

Even though Satan's sin is well-documented in Scripture, it still boggles the mind to realize that rebellion began in heaven. But the record is there in the prophets, couched in terms that cannot apply merely to a human leader such as the kings of Babylon or Tyre.

Without explaining the mystery completely, these texts supply much in the way of indictment against the angel called ""Lucifer"" (Isa. 14:12, KJV) or the ""morning star."" The problem clearly began in Satan's heart. He said in his heart (Isa 14:13) that he would exalt himself above the throne of God. The five ""I will"" statements of Isaiah 14 outline his sinister plan. Ezekiel 28 reveals that pride entered Satan's heart because of his great beauty (Ezek. 28:17).

Satan's rebellion was doomed to fail, of course; and his judgment was sure. One of the most exalted angels in heaven was cast out of God's presence and thrown to the earth (Isa. 14:12; Ezek. 28:17).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Unfortunately, our battles against Satan do not always end in decisive spiritual victory. But that's due to our humanity, not to any lack in God's daily provision for our spiritual lives. Knowing the kind of enemy Satan is, God has given us all the armor we need to defeat the devil.

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The Lord hath founded Zion.—Isa. 14.32

These words occur in the Burden concerning Philistia, which is of interest because of its historical allusions. The Burden was uttered in the year Ahaz died (see verse 28). Messengers from Philistia were in the city (see verse 32). From the history found in Kings and Chronicles we know that Ahaz had carried out his policy of seeking help from Assyria, robbing the House of the Lord to send a present to its king. We know also that the Philistines had carried out depredations in the South of Judah (2 Chr 28.18). Now Ahaz was dead, and envoys from Philistia were in the city. Probably they were there offering to make terms with Judah, possibly to offer to form an alliance. This called forth the Burden of the prophet. It foretold the discomfiture and doom of Philistia, and gave the true answer to the messengers. It was just this: "Jehovah hath founded Zion"; which was a refusal to seek any safety from alliances with the nations which were corrupt; and a declaration that the safety of Zion lay in the fact that it was founded by God, this necessarily involving the necessity for Zion's maintenance of true relationship with her Founder. Here is a principle of true statecraft. When a nation, which God has created and blessed, consents in the interests of her own safety to alliance with nations which in their deepest life are pagan, such a nation acts for her own undoing. She is safe always, and safe only as she maintains right relationship with God, and finds her confidence in His power to defend her against her foes. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 15

### **Isaiah 15:5 My heart crieth out for Moab. (R.V.).**

Moab was once thickly populated, and very fertile. But the country is now strewn with ruins; a few broken shafts of columns alone are standing, and deep wells cut into the heart of rock. That such a civilization should pass so entirely away, leaving no trace behind it, must have seemed most unlikely to the prophet's contemporaries; but these words have been literally fulfilled. So shall others of prophecy be fulfilled; and, indeed, each morning's dawn witnesses some further approach to their accomplishment.

It is to be noticed that the man of God takes no pleasure in these desolations, though Israel and Moab had been perpetually at feud. He speaks of the burden of Moab. Is not this the manner in which we should consider and proclaim the doom of the ungodly? Oh to preach of eternal judgment with wet eyes! Oh to tell men, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ! Oh to know the burdened heart, burdened even to breaking!

This is the only preaching which touches the heart of the unsaved. To announce their doom with metallic voice and unperturbed manner will only harden; but to speak with streaming eyes, and the eloquence of a broken heart, will touch the most callous. It is the broken heart that breaks hearts. Tears start tears. May our merciful High Priest impart to us his compassion and mercies, and lay on our hearts some of his burdens for dying men; that as we behold the cities we may weep, and that there may be a trembling in our voices as we proclaim the fearful woe that awaits the godless and impenitent. - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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My heart crieth out for Moab.—Isa 15.5

The Burden of Moab occupies this and the next chapter. There have been very different interpretations of this oracle. Glance ahead for a moment to verses 3 to 5 in chapter 16. The older expositors treat these as constituting the prophet's message to Moab as to the way by which she may be delivered, and his prediction of the benefits which will come to her under the Messianic reign. On the other hand, many modern writers interpret these verses as containing Moab's appeal to Judah for protection. I refer to this because the interpretation of the burden is dependent upon which view is taken. Without any misgiving, I adhere to the older view. This, then, is one of those instances in which the outlook of prophecy was enlarged so as to take in the wider purposes of God for the ultimate deliverance of all nations. In this chapter the theme is that of disaster for Moab, "In a night," that is with abrupt and startling suddenness two of her principal cities are laid waste, and she is reduced to impotent desolation. The vengeance is just, a righteous retribution for her pride and wickedness. Nevertheless her suffering touches the heart of the prophet of Jehovah; hence the exclamation, "My heart crieth out for Moab." This is the true evidence of sympathy and co-operation with God. Wickedness must be punished, but in the heart of God there is no joy in the suffering of the wicked. The "My heart crieth out for Moab" of Isaiah, is in perfect harmony with the lamentation of Jesus over Jerusalem doomed. The man who talks of the punishment, of the wicked without a sob in his heart, is not in close fellowship with God. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 16

### **Isaiah 16:5 And a throne shall be established in mercy. (R.V.).**

In those days thrones were not generally established in mercy; but in blood, and cruelty, and savage might. Addressing Moab, the prophet advises that in the hour of her anguish, when her fugitives gather at the fords of the Arnon, in their mad flight from before the conqueror, they should make peace with their ancient enemies the Jews, and appease their hatred, that the outcasts may find shelter in the Land of Promise. And he goes on to say, that when this should come to pass, their piteous appeal for protection will be generously met, because the throne shall at that time be established in mercy. The ancient causes of enmity will be forgotten; the old feuds will be condoned; and the protection of Israel will be to the trembling crowds of refugees like the shadow of a high rock flung across the sand, when all the land is baking in the noontide glare. Who can this be that sits on the throne of David, combining mercy with truth, seeking righteousness in his judgment, and swift to act on the behalf of the oppressed! None other than the Prince of the House of David, of whose kingdom there can be no end. Art thou a fugitive, driven from thy nest, and rushing to and fro as a scared and trembling bird (Isaiah 16:2)? Is the glare of the sun scorching thee? Dost thou stand at the fords of Arnon, with enemies behind, and death in front? Send ye lambs to the Mount of Zion; make peace with her King; invoke his forgiveness and salvation. Remember that though He is a great King, his throne is established in mercy. And his shadow shall be as the night in the midst of the noonday; He will hide the outcast, and will not betray the wanderer (Isaiah 16:3).. - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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### **Isaiah 16 My heart laments for Moab like a harp. Isaiah 16:11**

The English language has adopted the German word *schadenfreude*, which refers to the happiness people feel at the misfortune of others. When someone cuts you off in traffic and then a few miles down the road you see that a police officer has pulled him over for speeding, that twinge of satisfaction that you feel is *schadenfreude*.

We might expect God and His people to express *schadenfreude* in these pronouncements of judgment on the nations who had opposed the Lord. But in today's reading, we see the Lord instead grieving over the coming destruction of Moab.

Note first that this judgment was well deserved. Moab was proud and insolent, and they refused to worship the true God who could deliver them (Isaiah 16:6, 12). This was not a case of calamity befalling innocent people. The Lord was perfectly just in His declaration of Moab's demise.

But see also how the Lord laments for Moab. "My heart laments for Moab like a harp, my inmost being for Kir Hareseth" (Isaiah 16:11). The heart of God—the innermost part of the almighty, sovereign Lord—weeps for the disaster that is to befall the people of Moab. He weeps for the land of Moab that will be destroyed (Isaiah 16:9). God still loves His creation, both earth and people, even during judgment.

Finally, notice the promise of Jesus nestled amid this text. In the middle of this passage of judgment and lament, the hope found in Christ shines through. Oppression and destruction will end one day, and "in love a throne will be established; in faithfulness a man will sit on it—one from the house of David—one who in judging seeks justice and speeds the cause of the righteous" (Isaiah 16:4–5).

**APPLY THE WORD** How do we respond when bad things happen to bad people? Let's seek to follow God's example. Instead of celebrating, let us lament, recognizing that they are still created and loved by God even if they deserve what has happened. And then let us share the truth about freedom and forgiveness through Jesus that is available to all who put their faith in Him.

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And a throne shall be established in mercy; and One shall sit thereon in truth, in the tent of David; judging, and seeking judgment, and swift to do righteousness.—Isa. 16.5.

These words—as we have said in the previous note—constitute part of the prophet's indication to Moab of the way of deliverance. They may have been intended to represent the language of Moab in its plea for the help of Judah. It is, however, more than difficult, it is impossible for me to believe that words so full of light as to the principles of the Messianic Kingdom should have been suggested by Isaiah as coming from Moab. In either case, however, their value abides as a revelation of the only way of deliverance for Moab, or for any nation, from disaster which must follow the ways of pride and of evil. Such deliverance must result from a Throne, a centre of authority and administration; and from the fact that such a Throne is occupied by One Who is Himself seated on Truth, and Who in the administration of His Kingdom seeks justice, and is swift in the deed of righteousness. We need rightly to apprehend the statement that: "a Throne shall be established in lovingkindness." We are apt to think of it as meaning that a Throne is to be established for the display of leniency, as though the claims of righteousness may thereby be waived. Nothing is further from the truth. The Throne will insist upon righteousness and justice. Its Occupant is to be seated on truth. The crowning

lovingkindness of God to the world is that such a Throne is to be established. The most merciful method of government is that of strict justice. When we see in the midst of the Throne the Lamb as it had been slain, we know by that wondrous token that justice is vindicated, and so the Throne is for ever the Throne of lovingkindness. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 17

### **Isaiah 17:10–11 The harvest fleeth away in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow. (R.V.).**

How many among us might be addressed in these solemn words! Many are planting pleasant plants, which they hope will one day be beautiful in appearance; whilst from the slips they hope to rear fruit trees. One man is planting his schemes for making a fortune; another is setting slips that should bring him success and renown; yet another is busy in creating a political or religious movement that is intended to benefit mankind. The workers in the village allotment gardens in the early spring are an apt illustration of what politicians, company-mongers, and society-leaders, are attempting in other spheres.

But of what avail are all our preparations, so long as we forget the God of our salvation and are unmindful of the Rock of our strength? We shall never garner the harvest without his help and blessing. The day of grief and desperate sorrow will inevitably visit us, and sweep away all the results of our toils. The co-operation and blessing of God, sought in answer to prayer, cannot be left out of our calculations, if we are to win lasting success.

And is not the reverse also true? Supposing that we remember the God of our salvation, and are ever mindful of the Rock of our strength: may we not infer that our pleasant plants will root themselves, and our slips bear fruit in the coming years to the glory and praise of God, and for the blessing of thirsty wayfarers? "These simple teachings of farm and field knock continually at the doors of our own blessedness, with intent that we may enter therein, and find our home in the will of God, and our permanent lodging under the shadow of the Almighty." - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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### **Read Isaiah 17:7-14; Isaiah 14:28-17:14**

### **In that day men will look to their Maker and turn their eyes to the Holy One of Israel. Isaiah 17:7**

In his poem, "The Ballad of the White Horse," writer G. K. Chesterton penned these lines: "Pride flings frail palaces at the sky, / As a man flings up sand, / But the firm feet of humility / Take hold of heavy land. / Pride juggles with her toppling towers, / They strike the sun and cease, / But the firm feet of humility / They grip the ground like trees."

We see once again in today's reading that "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6). The roster of judgment in these chapters covers three of Israel's neighbor nations: Philistia (14:28–32), Moab (15–16), and Syria (17). The Philistines were proud of a successful revolt against Assyria, but Isaiah warned that this will prove temporary and they will yet be "bitten by the snake" of that empire's conquering army. Moab, including its capital city, Kir, will suffer the same fate—the land will be stripped and the people will flee in terror—for the same main reason, pride (16:6). In a similar way and for similar wrongs, possibly including a time when they took advantage of Israel or failed to come to her aid, Syria and its capital, Damascus, will be turned into a "heap of ruins."

Since the Israelites were God's people, these judgments on foreigners were no big deal to the Lord, right? Isaiah enjoyed prophesying against his nation's enemies, right? Nothing could be further from the truth! God loves all peoples and has always had a plan for the nations. Sin and judgment grieve Him wherever they occur: "My heart cries out over Moab ... My heart laments for Moab like a harp, my inmost being for Kir Hareseth" (15:5; 16:11). The Israelites were even urged to take in Moabite refugees in the Messiah's name (16:3–5).

The nations rage, events ebb and flow, but God remains in sovereign control of the unfolding of history (17:12–13). People should put away their idols and worship Him alone!

### **APPLY THE WORD**

Did you know that many of Isaiah's prophecies of judgment have already been fulfilled? Even if you have a study Bible, though, it can be hard to keep track of what happened when. We encourage you to obtain an Old Testament handbook or Bible atlas that has historical charts and timelines. You might photocopy the relevant pages, then mark them up in color to keep track. Doing this will help you get a clearer sense of the big picture as well as strengthen your faith in the sovereignty of God.

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In that day shall a man look unto his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel. And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands, neither shall he have respect to that which his fingers have made.—Isa 17.7-8.



These words occur in the Burden of Damascus which is principally concerned with the overthrow of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. At the time, Israel was in league with Damascus in order to protect herself from Assyria; while, as we have seen, the policy of the Kingdom of Judah, against which Isaiah protested, was that of seeking the aid of Assyria against the peril threatening her from this coalition between Israel and Syria. In this Burden the prophet foretold the destruction of Damascus, and the breaking down thus of that to which Israel was trusting. The result would be that Israel or Ephraim, would be reduced to a mere remnant. In these verses he declared what the result would be of this Divine judgment. Men would return to God, instead of trusting to their own policies. Isaiah does not state the alternative to confidence in God, as that of trusting in policy, but rather as that of trusting in false altars and false gods. This is a profound word; recognizing as it does, that what man puts his trust in is his god. These politicians of the Northern Kingdom in all probability would not have admitted that in making alliance with Damascus they were guilty of idolatry. Yet that was the prophet's view of their action. Their refusal to trust in Jehovah, and their seeking of safety in the help of Damascus, was equal to seeking the help of the altars and gods of Syria. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 18

**Isaiah 18:4 I will be still, and I will behold in my dwelling place. (R.V.).**

Assyria was marching against Ethiopia, the people of which are described as tall and smooth. And as the armies advance, God makes no effort to arrest them; it would seem as though they will be allowed to work their will. He is still watching them from his dwelling-place; the sun still shines on them; the dews refresh them. But before the harvest, when the flowers are becoming ripening grapes, the whole of the proud array of Assyria is smitten as easily as when sprigs are cut off by the pruning-hook of the husbandman.

Is not this a marvelous conception of God — being still and watching? His stillness is not acquiescence. His silence is not consent. He is only biding his time, and will arise, in the most opportune moment, and when the designs of the wicked seem on the point of success, to overwhelm them with disaster. As we look out on the evil of the world; as we think of the apparent success of wrongdoing; as we wince beneath the oppression of those that hate us, let us remember these marvelous words about God being still and beholding.

There is, however, another side to this. Jesus beheld his disciples toiling at the oars through the stormy night; and watched, though unseen, the successive steps of the anguish at Bethany, where Lazarus slowly passed through the stages of mortal sickness, till he succumbed and was borne to the rocky tomb. But He was only waiting the moment when He could interpose most effectually. Is He still to thee? He is not unobservant: He is beholding all things: He has his finger on thy pulse, keenly sensitive to all its fluctuations. He will come to save thee when the precise moment has arrived. . - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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For thus hath the Lord said unto me, I will be still, and I will behold in My dwelling-place; like clear heat in sun-shine, like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.—Isa 18.4

These words occur in an oracle which begins in chapter seventeen at verse twelve, and runs through this chapter. It has two movements, each beginning with the exclamation "Ah!" (17.12 and 18.1). There are those who treat this as the burden of Assyria. I understand it rather as a prophetic soliloquy in the midst of the burdens of the nations; and one which is the result of the coming of ambassadors from Ethiopia to the court of Judah. Their coming caused the prophet first of all to utter his consciousness of the tumult caused everywhere by the rushing of the nations. In the first movement he spoke of Jehovah's rebuking of them under the figure of a storm. In the second movement, in the words we have emphasized, he gave another picture of Jehovah. It is that of His stillness. That stillness is that of the heat and the dew, which ripen the grain and produce the harvest. The context here shows that the harvest contemplated was that of His vengeance and punishment of guilty nations; and God is seen by His very stillness and apparent inactivity as preparing for, and compelling that harvest, as the clear heat of sunshine, and the dews prepare for and compel the harvests of Nature. The same conception of God is revealed under different figures in these prophetic writings. It is one which is full of comfort when the heart is assaulted by all the commotions of godlessness, in the presence of which God seems to be inactive. He is never so. When He is still, He is beholding; and His beholding is that of compelling the ultimate purposes of His will. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 19

**Isaiah 19:24–25 Egypt my people, Assyria the work of my hands, Israel mine inheritance.**

It is very wonderful to find such expressions in the mouth of a Jew. It shows what an effect that coal of fire had produced on the lips of Isaiah. It had led him to know something of the love of God which overleaps the barriers of nationality and caste, and gives itself



to all who humbly seek after Him.

We have here the foreshadowing of an age, yet to be revealed, when the long discipline of God's dealings with men shall be consummated in their conversion to God. What a radiant prospect is thus suggested to us, when the most inveterate enemies of God's Church shall be received into her borders and regarded with the favor that God shows to his people! Who, standing amid the terrors of the plagues, could ever have supposed that Egypt would be addressed as "my people"? Who could have thought that Assyria, the tyrant persecutor, would ever be called "the work of my hands"? Yet these are the trophies and triumphs of Divine grace. Our Shepherd has many sheep, which are not of the Jewish fold: these also He must bring; and there shall be one flock, one Shepherd. Never despair of any, for God's grace abounds over mountains.

But Israel is always his inheritance. There he finds rest and home, for the Lord's portion is his people. Oh to know the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints! The soil of our life is poor and thin, the aspect bad, the stones many; but He who chose us will yet vindicate Himself, and if He has to empty heaven of its wealth He will do it rather than fail of his eternal purpose. Naaman asked for two mules' burdens of earth; but Christ can spare more than that, and will, to make the soil of a godly character. - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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### **Isaiah 19:19-25; Isaiah 18-23**

#### **So the Lord will make himself known to the Egyptians, and in that day they will acknowledge the Lord. Isaiah 19:21**

One of the primary lessons of Isaiah is that God is sovereign over the fates of all peoples. In Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God, theologian J. I. Packer explained: "The God of the Bible is both Lord and Lawgiver in His world; He is both man's King and man's Judge... Man is indubitably responsible to God, for God is the Lawgiver who fixes his duty, and the Judge who takes account of him as to whether or not he has done it. And God is indubitably sovereign over man, for He controls and orders all human deeds, as He controls and orders all else in His universe. Man's responsibility for his actions, and God's sovereignty in relation to those same actions, are thus, as we saw, equally real and ultimate facts."

Which nations are covered in the prophecies of judgment in today's reading? Ancient Ethiopia (Cush) and Egypt, linked here because Cush provided the rulers for one of the Egyptian dynasties (Isaiah 18-20); Babylon, Edom, and Arabia (Isaiah 21); and Tyre (Isaiah 23); with one chapter also aimed at Jerusalem itself (Isaiah 22). Isaiah used a variety of poetic and disturbing images to capture the power and inevitability of God's punishments. Harvests will be cut down early. Green land will become desert. Day will turn to night. Rivers, including the mighty Nile itself, will dry up and fail to support fishing or farming. Enemies will be fierce and internal conflict will make matters worse. Fear will spread like wildfire. All these pictures mean that these nations will be humiliated by military conquest, no matter how confident they are that they can defend themselves.

Despite His righteous judgments, God loves all these nations. There would come a day when He would send a Savior who would be for them as well. They will respond to Him in worship and become a "blessing on the earth," and He will say: "Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance" (Isaiah 19:19-25).

**APPLY THE WORD** In today's reading, Tyre, a well-known commercial city, was condemned as a "prostitute" seeking material prosperity above all (Isaiah 23:15-18). In modern times, it's worth asking if profits have displaced right moral principles in our country too. How is it possible to swim against this greedy current of consumerism in our daily lives? Even harder, how is it possible to swim against it as a Christian businessperson? Prayerfully reflect and then act on these issues, whether in your personal budget, work priorities, or voting choices.

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In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth.—Isa. 19.24

These words occur at the close of "the Burden of Egypt." They constitute perhaps the high-water mark in that element of prophetic utterance which, looking beyond the immediate, and the processes, foresaw a triumph of God wherein the opposition of the nations would be over-come, and they would be included in His realized Kingdom on earth. The first part of this burden had to do with the over-throw of Egypt by a Divine visitation in judgment. The second foretold the ultimate effect of the dealing with God with Egypt. She is seen as turning to Jehovah; His worship is established within her borders; a Saviour from Him brings her deliverance. Jehovah will deal with Egypt—smiting and healing. Then the prophet saw a still more glorious result. The ancient enemies of Israel, Assyria in the east, and Egypt to the west, are seen united by Israel, her territory becoming the highway over which they pass to and fro in their friendly communication with each other. The three states form a triple alliance, united in the worship of Jehovah and His perfect reign over them. It is a glorious vision. It has never been realized. It will be. Study the map and the newspaper to-day. There is the land of Israel to which Israel is surely returning. Egypt is still there, and through turmoil it is approaching order. Away to the west is the great and fascinating area, and the peoples to whom the power of Assyria will pass. Presently, when the true King comes, the alliance will be consummated. Let us realize the principle involved in its yet wider reaches. Presently under the rule of God, through His anointed King, all those nations, to-day at enmity against each other, will be unified. That will be the lasting and

## ISAIAH 20

### **Isaiah 20:6 And we, how shall we escape? (R.V.).**

The argument is as follows — Assyria, according to Isaiah's prophecies, would sweep down on Ethiopia, and take them into captivity; and when this happened, the inhabitants of the coast-line, which we know as Philistia, would have reason to fear indeed. If Ethiopia and Egypt, to whom they looked for aid, could not withstand the mighty northern nation, how hopeless it was for dwellers on the littoral to expect to withstand it by themselves!

The moral is obvious, and it is well pointed by the apostle Peter when he says: "The time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God, and if it begin first with us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?" Scarcely saved! It is as though our salvation tasked the resources of the Eternal God to the uttermost. He had grace and strength enough, but none to spare. Blood and tears and heart-break were the price with which our redemption was secured! How then will they escape who venture forth into the storm which soon shall break upon our world, apart from the only salvation which can withstand its fury? "If the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

A pious man, when death approached, longed to die in triumph for the conversion of his sons. Instead, his soul was overwhelmed with gloom. But this was used of God to the conversion of the whole family, for they said: If so good a man died in the dark, what will become of us? . - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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And the inhabitant of this coast-land shall say in that day, Behold, such is our expectation, whither we fled for help to be delivered from the King of Assyria; and we, how shall we escape? —Isa. 20.6

This is a most interesting chapter, because of its historic nature. First the expedition referred to in the first verse, is now definitely placed by Sargon's inscriptions as having taken place in 711 B.C. Then this reference to an activity of Isaiah is arresting. For three years he went in and out among the people of Jerusalem, in tatters and shoeless, as a mendicant. Here, in close connection with his Burden of Egypt, he gives an account of the reason for this strange action, and the signification of it. We may think of him as doing this during that period in which the testimony to the nation was still sealed, and he was teaching the elect remnant of loyal souls. His wretched appearance was the symbol of what would happen to Egypt as the result of the triumph of Assyria over her. Behind all this we discover the proposed policy of the rulers of Jerusalem. By this time they had learned the futility of looking to Assyria for aid, and were proposing to turn to Egypt for help against Assyria. This was futile, for Assyria would conquer Egypt. The closing words of this chapter enforce the teaching. The inhabitants of this coastland, that is of Palestine in its entirety—will see the folly of their expectation, and cry "And we, how shall we escape?" It is most probable that Hezekiah the king was at this time among those being instructed by the prophet. Again it is for us to recognize the principle involved. There is no place of security for the people of God, other than that to be found in the rule of God. All expectation not centred in God, is doomed to disappointment and discomfiture. The policies which exclude Him, all, invariably, inevitably, break down. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 21

### **Isaiah 21:11 Watchman, what of the night?**

Across the desert spaces a voice was heard calling from the land of Esau, calling to the prophet, to know whether the long night of Assyrian oppression was nearly over. He stood on the hills of Zion watching the dawn, as the priests were accustomed to do, that they might give the first signal for the offering of the morning sacrifice. The question, "Watchman, what of the night?" was repeated twice as if the weary sufferers were at their last gasp.

The prophet's answer was enigmatical. The morning was already on its way; but the night was chasing it, spreading her raven wings in the same sky — "The morning cometh, and also the night." Morning for Israel, but night for Edom; but if Edom would repent, she might come again with her inquiries to find that for her also God had turned the shadow of death into the morning.

Never in the history of the ages have men looked more eagerly towards the Eastern sky, or inquired more persistently, What of the night? What of the night? To those that watch the Eastern sky, standing on the mount of vision afforded by the Word of God, there is but one answer: The morning cometh, but also the night. The morning of millennial glory, and of the bridal chamber; of the taking home of the saints, and the revelation of Jesus Christ: but the night of unutterable sorrow to the servant who knew the Lord's will and did it not, and to the world which would not have this Man to reign over it. Yet if individuals will but turn from darkness to light, and from Satan to God, they will be welcomed, and receive an inheritance amongst the children of the morning. "Come ye again,

### **Isaiah 21:11 "Watchman, what of the night?"**

What enemies are abroad? Errors are a numerous horde, and new ones appear every hour: against what heresy am I to be on my guard? Sins creep from their lurking places when the darkness reigns; I must myself mount the watch-tower, and watch unto prayer. Our heavenly Protector foresees all the attacks which are about to be made upon us, and when as yet the evil designed us is but in the desire of Satan, he prays for us that our faith fail not, when we are sifted as wheat. Continue O gracious Watchman, to forewarn us of our foes, and for Zion's sake hold not thy peace.

"Watchman, what of the night?" What weather is coming for the Church? Are the clouds lowering, or is it all clear and fair overhead? We must care for the Church of God with anxious love; and now that Popery and infidelity are both threatening, let us observe the signs of the times and prepare for conflict.

"Watchman, what of the night?" What stars are visible? What precious promises suit our present case? You sound the alarm, give us the consolation also. Christ, the polestar, is ever fixed in his place, and all the stars are secure in the right hand of their Lord.

But watchman, when comes the morning? The Bridegroom tarries. Are there no signs of his coming forth as the Sun of Righteousness? Has not the morning star arisen as the pledge of day? When will the day dawn, and the shadows flee away? O Jesus, if thou come not in person to thy waiting Church this day, yet come in Spirit to my sighing heart, and make it sing for joy. - Spurgeon Morning and Evening

"Now all the earth is bright and glad  
With the fresh morn;  
But all my heart is cold, and dark and sad:  
Sun of the soul, let me behold thy dawn!  
Come, Jesus, Lord,  
O quickly come, according to thy word."

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The morning cometh, and also the night.—Isa. 21.12

In this chapter we have three Burdens, those concerning Babylon, Edom, and Arabia. They are characterized by a mystic and visionary note. The first, concerning Babylon, is perfectly clear as to its vital message. It foretold the fall of Babylon. The last, concerning Arabia, that is, concerning the wandering tribes occupying that region, is obscure as to the particular events calling it forth, but it was a definite prediction that within a year the tribe of Kedar should be destroyed. The central Burden, that concerning Dumah, which is Edom, is indefinite as to a message, and that very indefiniteness is the message. The prophet interpreted the mental attitude of Edom as that of inquiry as to whether the night of her desolation was passing. That is the significance of the voice calling out of Seir—"Watchman, what of the night?" To such an inquiry the reply of the prophet was intentionally indefinite. There was no answer, except that there were signs of morning and of night. It has been suggested that the prophet meant that he had no clear vision of Edom's destiny; or that he foretold some relief to be followed by more terrible suffering; or that some would find release, and some destruction; or that there was morning for Israel and night for Dumah. To me none of these is satisfactory. It would rather seem as though the prophet declared an alternative of morning or of night, and by his final words suggested an attitude. If the spirit of inquiry was aroused, let it be maintained; and let them turn and come again. To all the restless crying of men in the midst of trouble as to the passing of the night, the answer of revelation is that there is morning coming, and night also. Men by their own attitudes and choices decide whether they will come to the morning or pass to the night. - G Campbell Morgan

## **ISAIAH 22**

### **Isaiah 22:22 The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder.**

The Divine Man stands behind the earthly type in these words in majestic beauty. "These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and none shall shut, and that shutteth and none openeth. Behold, I have set before thee a door opened, which none can shut." Words of incomparable splendor, capable of endless application.

Let Jesus open each day of service, each opportunity of ministry, each door into another soul, each new chamber of life, and knowledge, and opportunity; and remember that He who sets before us open doors is He who knows our works, and that we have but little strength. He will never open a door leading into a passage of life which is too difficult for our strength to tread. The open

door will reveal to us possibilities within our reach of which we had not dreamt; and when once a door is opened, though access to it may be beset, as in Bunyan's vision, by armed men, and though strong pressure is brought to bear upon it for its closing, let us dare to persevere against disease and pestilence and opposition, relying on these sublime words, None shall shut. Dear soul, say it to thyself repeatedly, None shall shut.

But the Lord shuts doors. "The Spirit of Jesus suffered them not to go into Bithynia." Down a long corridor of closed doors we may sometimes have to pass. It seems heartbreaking to see doors labeled, Friendship, Love, Home, shut against us; but beyond them there is the one unclosed door through which we shall enter into our true life. Oh do not lose heart and hope in useless weeping over the closed doors of the past. Follow Him, who has the keys. - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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**Isaiah 22:22.** The Spanish Jews have a silver key of David, bearing the inscription, "God shall open, the King shall enter." - D L Moody

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And in that day did the Lord, the Lord of hosts call to weeping...and behold, joy and gladness . . .—Isaiah 22.12-13

That statement gives the key to the situation calling forth this Burden of the valley of vision. In it the prophet turned from his messages concerning the surrounding nations, to give attention to Jerusalem. While many separate between the first part of this chapter (Isa. 22.1-14 and the last part (Isa. 22.15-25), I cannot do so. In the second part we have again an historical incident. Shebna is seen, holding high office. Nothing is definitely said about his wrongdoing, but it is almost certain that he was the leader of the political party which was looking toward Egypt. The message of the prophet was that he was to be removed from office, and Eliakim appointed. That this was done, we gather from the fact that in the day when Assyria came to the gates, Eliakim held the office, and Shebna only a second place. The city, under the rule of Shebna, was given over to every kind of material festivity. It was against this that the prophet declaimed. There was the gravest danger in the hour; it was a time when the only hope of the nation lay in its tears of penitence and repentance. For these the Lord was calling, and the nation was responding with drunken revelry. To the prophet the sin of Jerusalem in this matter was past forgiveness. Hence his agony and his anger. The words give us solemn pause. How often in our own national history, when we have been indulging in riotous rejoicing, we should have been in sackcloth and ashes! Yet there was a man who refused to be comforted (see Isa. 22.4); and around him were gathered a group of loyal souls. By these the nation was better served than by the wild and shouting crowds. It is true national service, to bear national sins upon the heart and con-science, and by our tears to witness to our God, in all such hours. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 23

### **Isaiah 23:4 The sea hath spoken.**

Zidon is bidden to be ashamed because she is suddenly left childless; and this to an Eastern woman was shame indeed. And the prophet, personifying Zidon as the City of the Sea, describes the sea herself as lamenting. It is as though the sea took up Zidon's complaint at the destruction of her children, and spoke in all her multitudinous waves.

With what different tones the sea speaks! Sometimes in the musical breath of her wavelets on the beach; or the long drawl of the shingle in the recession of the retiring billow; or in the rising storm, when the waters lift up their voice; or in the angry roar of the mighty waves far out at sea. Speaking in whispers and in thunder; speaking to itself and to God under the canopy of night! The sea-voices are not the least amongst those of nature. Old Ocean seems to us sometimes like a great organ on which every note of the heart is represented.

And what are the wild waves saying? Listen! "We are his, for He made us; we own his sway, for He once trod our crests; his voice is as the voice of many waters; his thoughts are deep as our profoundest depths; his throne stands beside the sea of glass mingled with fire; his least word is omnipotent over our wildest fury."

But the sea shall one day speak for the last time. The lonely soul of the beloved apostle, which had so often listened to the chime of the Aegean waves around his island prison, rejoiced to know that the sea should one day be no more. No more the speech of the storm; no more the mournful cadence of the retiring wavelet at night telling of separation and loneliness. "The first heaven and the first earth are passed away, and the sea is no more." - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord; it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing.—Isa 23.18

In the Burden of Tyre there is no gleam of hope for her ultimate inclusion in the Kingdom of God, as in the case of Egypt and Assyria; but throughout, there is the declaration that she is within that Kingdom as to the fact of the Divine government. In the much fuller and more elaborate article of Ezekiel concerning Tyre, there is the same note of hopelessness. Moreover in Ezekiel the

reasons for that hopelessness are very fully revealed. Isaiah foretold the catastrophe that would overtake Tyre, bringing a seventy years' desolation. Then he declared that she would be restored, because Jehovah would visit her. But she would remain a harlot, trafficking as before, with all the kingdoms of the world. It is in that connection that these words were uttered. They do not mean that Tyre will conduct her commerce on holy principles; but that, under the pressure of the Divine government, her gains will not be stored for her own enrichment, but employed on behalf of the people of God. This prophetic word has an application much wider than to Tyre. The earth is Jehovah's and the fulness thereof, and in the day of His perfected Kingdom on earth, all its re-sources, which man has exploited for selfish purposes, will be recovered and employed for the people within that Kingdom. The ultimate destiny of wealth is not that of establishing tyrannies, but that of providing sufficiency for the people constituting the commonwealth of God. To this end Jehovah reigneth. Happy are those who dedicate whatever they have of earth's resources to this high and holy purpose. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 24

### **Isaiah 24 From the ends of the earth we hear singing: "Glory to the Righteous One." Isaiah 24:16**

Every day, President Barack Obama is handed a purple folder with ten letters written by ordinary Americans. Many of the letters deal with the current economic downturn and the struggles people are experiencing. A small business owner wrote of his fears that he would be forced to lay off employees. A homeowner described her family's difficulties in making mortgage payments after her husband lost his job and had to accept one that paid much less. The White House press secretary said, "They help him focus on the real problems people are facing."

What a privilege to have the attention of one of the most powerful men in the world! Do we hold our access to the Lord in such high esteem? What an incredible honor to have a personal relationship with the Sovereign God! When the story of history has been fully unfolded, the ends of the earth will be singing His praises, "Glory to the Righteous One" (Isaiah 24:16).

In Isaiah 24, we see that fulfilling God's promises and establishing His kingdom include the necessity of judgment on sin. Because He is powerful, it will be done, and nothing can stop it. Because He is just, He will not show favoritism based on social position or economic status (Isaiah 24:2). And because He is holy, sin and disobedience will result in punishment (Isaiah 24:5-6). Such things cannot simply be passed over—the guilt of human rebellion against Him is very real (vv. 20-22). The judgment is vividly described with images of burning, withering, destruction, and desolation (Isaiah 24:7-13).

Even in the midst of this, a faithful remnant of God's followers exists, shouting for joy and acclaiming His majesty (Isaiah 24:14-16). Shouldn't they be weeping over such terrible events? No, they rejoice because sin is defeated. They rejoice in the accomplishment of God's justice and the triumph of His holiness.

APPLY THE WORD Enmeshed as we are in the day-to-day events of history, it's sometimes hard to keep the big picture in mind. Sometimes it looks as though injustice is winning the day or unrighteousness has the upper hand in our nation or in the world. But it isn't so! Whether we can understand it or not, God's sovereign will for history is being done and His victory is guaranteed. The "end of the story" is never in doubt. Amen!

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### **Isaiah 24:16 From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs.**

This chapter exceeds in sublimity. The prophet first describes the general desolation about to overtake the world of his time, when, through the ruthless invasions of Nebuchadnezzar, it would become utterly emptied and spoiled. He describes the earth as languishing and fading away, and the high ones of the people languishing (Isaiah 24:4). Polluted nature is depicted as groaning in bitter anguish beneath the enormous sins of men, who had transgressed the law, changed the ordinance, and broken the everlasting covenant of their God. All joy is darkened; the mirth of the land is gone.

The scene is changed, and our thought is turned from the judgment and punishment of the wicked, to the blessed lot of the people of God; we are taught to see the Lord of Hosts reigning on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously. And all who see it are compelled to confess that it is well with his people who are under such a King. And as that spectacle is beheld by the sons of men, as they compare their misery with the light and joy of the people of God, they lift up their voices and sing. They shall lift up their voice, they shall shout; for the majesty of the Lord, they shall cry aloud from the sea. Where morning lights her fires they shall glorify Him; and from the uttermost parts of the earth songs roll home in a tumult of ecstasy, "Glory, glory to the righteous."

It is a true sentence. Though for our discipline, and to fit us to minister to men, we are often passed through the fiery furnace, yet on the whole it is well with us. Ours is the peace of God; ours the knowledge that love is over all; ours the anticipation of a morning that shall never be overcast.- F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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The earth also is polluted under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.—Isa. 24.5

This and the following three chapters constitute one prophetic utterance. It is a vision of the Day of Jehovah. In the series of the Burdens of the nations the prophet had taken a wider outlook than that of his own people, but always with the nation of God at the centre. Here his outlook is still further enlarged as it takes in the whole earth; but here also God's people are in mind from beginning to end, viewed in their relation to the earth. The vision is in two movements; the first describes the desolation of the earth (24.1-20); the second describes the restoration which comes by the Day of Jehovah (Isa 24.21-27). The desolation is first declared to be the result of Divine action. It is "Jehovah maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof." Then—in these particular words—the reason of this desolate activity of God is revealed. It is that the earth is polluted under its inhabitants. The act of God is the operation of the laws by which the Divine creation is governed. Man has transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, and broken the covenant. For an interpretation of these words of Isaiah read Paul—Rom 1.18-32. In these words we find a recognition of a true order. In it, man, keeping covenant, observing the ordinance, obeying law, reigns over the earth, and leads it out into all beauty and fruitfulness. When man breaks down in his relationship with God, His laws, His ordinances, His covenant—then he becomes polluted, and he communicates his pollution to the earth. This is the interpretation of all disease, all insanity, all the things of waste, of disorder, of strife, of misery in human history and human experience. A polluted race pollutes the earth, and chaos is the result. - G Campbell Morgan

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### Isaiah 24:9 A BITTER DRINK.

Earthly security is the worst foe of confidence in God. If I say, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years, take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke 12:19), then the road of faith is barricaded. Adversity sets the barn on fire, and thus "the many goods laid up for many years" are gone and can no longer block the path of faith. Blessed axe of sorrow, clear a path to God by cutting down the thick trees of my earthly comfort.

When I say, "My mountain stands firm, I shall never be moved" (Ps. 30:6-7), the visible fortification, rather than the invisible protector, engages my attention. Then the earthquake shakes the rocks, the mountain is swallowed up, and I must fly to the immovable Rock of ages to build my confidence. Worldly ease is a great foe of faith. It loosens the joints of holy strength and snaps the muscles of sacred courage.

The balloon never rises until the ropes are cut, and affliction does this same sharp service for believing souls. When the wheat sleeps comfortably in the husks, it is useless; it must be threshed from its resting place before its value can be known.

I make this sad confession. When my soul is happy and things prosper, I do not live so near to God as I do in the midst of trials and depression. When the world's bread is sugared and buttered, we eat it until we become sick. Then the world changes our diet, filling our mouths with vinegar and making our drink bitter. The world's wells are full of sweet but poisonous water. We pitch our tents at the mouth of the well and drink until we forget the well of Bethlehem. When earth's waters become bitter like Marah's stream (Ex. 15:23), we turn away sick and faint. But this affliction brings us to our God, just as the barking dog drives the wandering sheep to the shepherd's hand.

My God, how precious You are to my soul in the night! You, my bright and morning star, how sweetly You shine. Amen. - C H Spurgeon - "Beside Still Waters"

## ISAIAH 25

### Isaiah 25

#### **In perfect faithfulness you have done marvelous things, things planned long ago. Isaiah 25:1**

Superman was originally introduced in a serial comic book in 1938. The story told of a boy from another planet, Krypton, who landed on earth and soon discovered that he possessed supernatural powers. The hero, inspired by characters like Samson and Hercules, had incredible strength and could leap great distances. When the comic was animated, however, they decided the hero should fly, as leaping looked a bit ridiculous. Although Superman was a force for good, he was not completely indestructible. He could be destroyed by kryptonite.

Our passage for today portrays God as someone with incredible power and strength. He reduces fortified cities to mere rubble (Isa 25:2). The world acknowledges the incredible power of the Almighty. The fearful reaction of the wicked toward God is contrasted with the behavior God shows toward His children. For those who believe in God, He is a source of incredible comfort and blessing.

God has prepared a banquet—an extravagant feast—for those who love Him (Isa 25:6). This demonstrates how God goes above

and beyond our expectations. He demonstrates “perfect faithfulness” toward His children, and carries out a plan for our lives that He has planned for us from long before we could have possibly devised it for ourselves.

The closing verses of the chapter acknowledge the pain of living on this earth. We know the ache of death and the tears of suffering. God has promised that these will one day be eliminated. But the same God that can be trusted by His people should be greatly feared by His enemies. God will triumph over evil. His enemies will be destroyed. He does not have a hidden weakness that will allow His destruction. He is the ultimate conqueror and our trusted hero.

**APPLY THE WORD** Sometimes we feel that we are fighting battles each day, whether it’s a challenging workplace or a difficult family member or even our own besetting sins. Remember that you have a hero on your side. He has promised to avenge evil and protect you from danger. He sees the future and has a plan for your life that He is capable of fulfilling. Thank God for His love and protection today.

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**Isaiah 25:8 He will swallow up death in victory.**

In this ode, which Isaiah prepared for singing when Babylon the first should have fallen, the apostle, taught by the Holy Ghost, saw an anticipation of the triumph of the saints, when the strong bastions of death should be destroyed before the coming of Him who is the resurrection and the life. “This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” In these words he refers to the first stage in the Second Advent, when the living saints shall be changed, and those who have died shall be raised; and then he proceeds to quote these words, “When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”

There can be no doubt that this is Paul’s prayer for himself. He says, “We would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life.” No doubt it would be very delightful! None of the pains of dissolution; no going forth of the unclothed spirit; but the sudden subliming and transfiguring of the mortal, as ice passes into water, or water into vapor. It is not to be wondered at that the prophet adds, “The Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces.” In the rapture of reunion, in the glad embrace of eternity, in the consciousness that death and trouble are for ever behind, and that God has kept his word, we shall forget how to weep!

The prophet also records the triumphant song which will break from myriads of glad spirits, when the hope of the Church will be realized, and her long patience rewarded: “It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God: we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”- F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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**Read Isaiah 25:1-9; Isaiah 24-25**

**On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples. Isaiah 25:6**

A Chinese restaurant in London is now serving a bowl of soup that costs £108, or about \$209. The soup is called Buddha Jumps Over the Wall and features seafood and vegetables, with the prize ingredient being shark’s fin. This shark’s fin soup must be ordered about a week ahead of time, and the restaurant owner claimed to sell two bowls per month. “It’s worth the money,” he said. That would be a matter of opinion. No matter how tasty, it is, after all, just food. But when God prepares “a feast of rich food for all peoples” (Isaiah 25:6), it certainly won’t be “just food.”

Isaiah 24 and Isaiah 25 form a contrasting pair of chapters. Isaiah 24 is about destruction. The earth will be ruined and devastated. These images are eschatological—Isaiah was placing “near history” events such as the judgments on Israel and Assyria into the context of “all history” and the larger historical working out of God’s plan of salvation. The “everlasting covenant” that has been broken by rebellious humanity points back to Adam and Noah (Isaiah 24:5). The basic issue is a sinful failure to worship the one true Creator God. Isaiah’s harsh words, relieved only by a brief interlude of praise spoken by a redeemed remnant (Isaiah 24:14–16), serve as a warning to turn away from evil, a testament to the sovereignty and justice of God, and a reminder of divine accountability.

Isaiah 25, on the other hand, is about re-creation. Despite the devastation of judgment, Isaiah recognized that God would deliver a remnant and be utterly faithful to His promises (Isaiah 25:1, 9). His strength would win honor from the nations. And while He silences the song of the ruthless, He is also a refuge for the poor and needy (Isaiah 25:4–5). Indeed, God will prepare a feast of worldwide fellowship and celebration. The grieving will be comforted, and death will be swallowed up forever (Isaiah 25:6–8; cf. 1 Cor. 15:51–57; Rev. 21:4).

**APPLY THE WORD** In the spirit of the rich feast that God is preparing for His people, why not plan some hospitality soon? For example, since it’s summer, you might invite your small group or a couple of other families over for a backyard barbecue. Spread a feast of grilled beef and chicken, fruit salad, corn-on-the-cob, ice cream, and other seasonal specialties. If the thought of cleaning up afterwards is stopping you, remember 1 Peter 4:9: “Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.”

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an anticipation of the triumph of the saints, when the strong bastions of death should be destroyed before the coming of Him who is the resurrection and the life. "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." In these words he refers to the first stage in the Second Advent, when the living saints shall be changed, and those who have died shall be raised; and then he proceeds to quote these words, "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

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And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.—Isa. 25.9

'In that day,' is the phrase which unifies the section of this vision of restoration. Note its occurrences, Isa 24.21, Isa 25.9, Isa 26.1, Isa 27.1-2, Isa 27.12-13. Each time a new line of consideration is introduced, which it is not within our province to deal with now, but which the student will do well to observe. The Day, throughout, is the Day of Jehovah. The words we are emphasizing declare the sense which will result from the activity of Jehovah. In that activity He will subdue all false authority, both spiritual and human. See Isa 24.21, where "the host of the high ones on high," refers to the spiritual forces of evil, and stands in contrast to "the kings of the earth upon earth." The activity of Jehovah in His Day will be that of such retributive justice as will deliver the poor and needy. But let the whole of the chapter be pondered, then this great exclamation will be understood. The truth of it is the song which inspires the hope, the courage, the service, the sacrifice of His people in all the days of travail. The only way of deliverance for the earth from the desolation resulting from its pollution by men who have turned their back upon God, is that God does not forsake the earth or them. He acts in holy wrath, inspired by eternal love, against all the forces of evil. And in His great Day men will discover Him, and know that through Him alone salvation is possible. The discovery of God through His judgments will be the way of the restoration of the earth, since it has rejected His disclosure of Himself in grace through His Son. Yet that discovery will be a discovery of His grace, for He has appointed that the Man of His right hand shall administer the activity of His judgment. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 26

**Read Isaiah 26:1-9; Isaiah 26-27**

**You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. Isaiah 26:3**

Imagine a pregnant woman going into labor. Her time has come: the contractions are increasing in frequency, and the pain is increasing in intensity. She and her husband rush to the hospital, hoping the labor will be short and the baby healthy. Phone calls are placed to family members; everyone is waiting. In due time, the woman gives birth to ... wind? No baby? All that for nothing?

This was one of Isaiah's dramatic word-pictures for what humans can do compared to what God can do (26:18-19). God does many powerful things, including giving life; by comparison, humans can do nothing—all our labor and self-confidence are empty. Chapter 26 is mostly a psalm of praise centered around what it means to trust in God. The strength of a people is found in their understanding of His righteousness and faithfulness. If we truly understand that it is He who saves and not military power or human ability or something else, and if we stand steadfast in that faith, then our hearts are at peace. There's no need for anxiety or fear. Our "eternal Rock" is strong against the storms of life (26:1-4). Furthermore, trusting in God means relying on His justice, obeying His commands, spreading the glory of His name throughout the earth, and longing for a personal relationship and communion with Him.

Chapter 27 focuses more specifically on the deliverance of Israel. Talk of a monster being slain gives way to a picture of God once more carefully tending His vineyard (27:2-3; cf. Isaiah 5). Isaiah meditated here again on God's unshakeable love for His people. From root to bud to blossom to fruit, the nation would flourish again (27:6). Though a season of punishment for covenant-breaking and idolatry lay ahead, a season of restoration and blessing would follow. The exile-to-come will end, God will gather up His people, and they will return home and rightfully worship Him once again.



APPLY THE WORD With Isaiah 26:1-2 in mind, pray for your country today. Pray that justice, righteousness, and integrity would be promoted in both public and private life. Ask God to empower His people to stand for Him and to share the good news of Jesus Christ more boldly. Pray that sound doctrine would prevail in the church, and that attacks from Satan and temptations from the world would be in vain. Pray that God's people would remain faithful to Him no matter what.

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**C H SPURGEON Spurgeon's Expositions often have a devotional flavor so be sure to check out what he writes on...**

[Isaiah 26](#)

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**Isaiah 26:1. Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.**

Men appoint walls and bulwarks for salvation; but God appoints salvation for walls and bulwarks. Salvation is often without walls and bulwarks, and walls and bulwarks without salvation. Salvation is the safer safeguard. VENNING.

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**Isaiah 26:3.** P. P. Bliss used to say, "I love this verse more than any other verse in the Bible, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee.'" The tree of peace strikes its roots into the crevices of the Rock of Ages. - D L Moody

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**Isaiah 26:3.** Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee

The habit of reckoning on Christ is the key to a restful life. F. B. MEYER.

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**Isaiah 26:3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee.**

The Hebrew is very significant. "Perfect peace" is Peace, peace. As though the soul dwelt within double doors, like some chambers which we have entered, which had double windows against the noise of the street, and a baize door within the ordinary one to deaden the sound of voices from the next apartment. Understand, dear soul, that it is thy privilege to live inside the double doors of God's loving care. He says to thee, "Peace, peace." If one assurance is not enough, He will follow it with a second and a third. The city is strong, the bulwarks and walls are massive, salvation is appointed and prepared; but the gates do not frown with iron or move heavily on hinges of stone, they open musically and gently.

We remember how, on the evening of his resurrection, our Lord spoke the double peace. Peace, because of his wounds, the peace of the justified; and peace, because He was sending his apostles forth, as the Father had sent Him. The one is the peace of the evening, when we come back to our home, wounded and soiled: the other of the morning, when we dwell in the will of Him who chose our lot and path. His blood and his will — these are the double doors of our peace.

We must see to it that our mind is stayed on God. For mind the margin suggests imagination. It is through our imaginings that we get perturbed and defiled. We anticipate and fancy so many ogres; we harbor such dark forebodings; chambers of imagery are thrown open to such unseemly company; hence our perturbation. Do not imagine, but trust; do not anticipate, but leave God to choose. "Looking forward strains the eyesight; looking upward opens heaven." - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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**Isaiah 26:4 EVERLASTING STRENGTH.**

Some of you have passed through deep waters and have not drowned. Some of you have been sustained for forty years in the wilderness, and you should know God's faithfulness. Yet I am ashamed that you become disheartened and discouraged. But most of all, I am ashamed when you fall into depression, for I have been there myself.

When your vision is obscured, you walk in darkness and are greatly molested by doubts and haunted with fears. You can hardly grasp anything to believe in. It is in this season of acute distress, when the world has no comfort to offer, that God's Word can minister infinite delight as it soothes and heals the heart's sorrows. Surely He who has preserved you in all your previous distress will not desert you in your present adversities.

If you had not taken delight in God's Word, you would long ago have perished in your affliction. Look back, God has been sufficient, so what reason do you have to suspect that He will not befriend you to the end? It is a great comfort to stand on divine faithfulness. May the Holy Spirit help you grasp this delightful truth.

Rejoice in the faithfulness of God. You are not poor, for your Father is rich. You are not deserted, for God is with you. If only I could touch your heart and make you see how God is working for you even now. Surely you will be helped. "Trust in the LORD forever, for in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength" (Is. 26:4). - C H Spurgeon - "Beside Still Waters"

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**Isaiah 26:4 "Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."**

Seeing that we have such a God to trust to, let us rest upon him with all our weight; let us resolutely drive out all unbelief, and

endeavour to get rid of doubts and fears, which so much mar our comfort; since there is no excuse for fear where God is the foundation of our trust. A loving parent would be sorely grieved if his child could not trust him; and how ungenerous, how unkind is our conduct when we put so little confidence in our heavenly Father who has never failed us, and who never will. It were well if doubting were banished from the household of God; but it is to be feared that old Unbelief is as nimble nowadays as when the psalmist asked, "Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Will he be favourable no more?" David had not made any very lengthy trial of the mighty sword of the giant Goliath, and yet he said, "There is none like it." He had tried it once in the hour of his youthful victory, and it had proved itself to be of the right metal, and therefore he praised it ever afterwards; even so should we speak well of our God, there is none like unto him in the heaven above or the earth beneath; "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One." There is no rock like unto the rock of Jacob, our enemies themselves being judges. So far from suffering doubts to live in our hearts, we will take the whole detestable crew, as Elijah did the prophets of Baal, and slay them over the brook; and for a stream to kill them at, we will select the sacred torrent which wells forth from our Saviour's wounded side. We have been in many trials, but we have never yet been cast where we could not find in our God all that we needed. Let us then be encouraged to trust in the Lord for ever, assured that his ever lasting strength will be, as it has been, our succour and stay. - Spurgeon Morning and Evening

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**Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth the dead.—Isa. 26.19**

In all this Oracle of the Day of Jehovah as the day of restoration, there is no more 'wonderful word than this. It is a singularly clear and definite foretelling of resurrection. The truth of immortality had already been declared in the word of the previous chapter, "He hath swallowed up death for ever" (see verse 8). But here the prophetic word goes further. Immortality does not necessarily involve a resurrection of the body. It does mean the persistence of conscious personality beyond that dissolution of spirit and body which we call death. But here the fact of the resurrection is foretold so clearly that there can be no mistaking of the meaning of the prophet. Let it be granted that we need, and that we have, the full Divine revelation of this fact in the New Testament; it is none the less remarkable that we find it so clearly stated in this wonderful message of Isaiah. Very beautiful is the prophet's poetic figure of the dew. Dr. Skinner says that a better rendering would be, "A dew of lights is Thy dew;" and that "it is a heavenly, supernatural dew that is meant; as soon as this falls on the dead they awake to life." These great facts of immortality and resurrection completely transfigure our conceptions of life, and we respond to the cry of the singer which calls us to awake and sing, even though we dwell in the dust. The dust is not the last word; the narrow confines of the here and the now, are not the boundaries of our being. Beyond, life brings its explanations, its fulfillments. What we know not now, we shall know hereafter. All that we have not attained, we may attain when He shall fashion anew the bodies of our humiliation, that they may be con-formed to the body of His glory. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 27

**Isaiah 27:5 Let him take hold of my strength.**

Such are the alternatives. You must either resist God's strength, or take hold of it. If the former, it is as though thorns and briars should fight flame. There is no fury in God; He has no desire for the death of the ungodly, but that he should turn from his unrighteousness and live. Yet if the blinded soul persists in flinging itself into collision with Him, it must suffer finally and irretrievably. But notice the double invitation, "Let him take hold of my strength; let him make peace."

Where shall I find his strength? the sinner asks. In the mighty mountains girded with strength; in the arch of the sky; in the break of the ocean wave? No, not in these; but where that dying Man pours out his soul unto death, and is numbered with the transgressors. But surely there is the weakness of God, not the strength! Nay, but it is the strength. The weakness of God is stronger than men. "We preach Christ crucified: to the Jews a stumblingblock, and to Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, Christ the power of God."

Come hither, soul of man, the strength of God is in that pierced, transfixed hand. Take hold of it, it will lift thee. In Him God is reconciled; there is nothing to do but take the offered mercy, accept his reconciliation, and be at peace. God is reconciled; be thou reconciled. God has made peace; be thou at peace. God reaches out his hand; take hold of it. God draws nigh; draw nigh to Him. Then He will keep thee, whatever be thy foes or temptation; his protecting strength will interpose between them and thee. He will keep thee night and day (Isaiah 27:3). - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

"Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?

The blood of Jesus whispers peace within."

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**C H SPURGEON Spurgeon's Expositions often have a devotional flavor so be sure to check out what he writes on...**

[Isaiah 27](#)

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## Isaiah 27:3 Divine Cultivation

"I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: Lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day" (Isaiah 27:3).

When the LORD Himself speaks in His own proper person rather than through a prophet, the word has a peculiar weight to believing minds. It is Jehovah Himself who is the keeper of His own vineyard; He does not trust it to any other, but He makes it His own personal care. Are they not well kept whom God Himself keeps? We are to receive gracious watering, not only every day and every hour "but every moment." How we ought to grow! How fresh and fruitful every plant should be! What rich clusters the vines should bear! But disturbers come; little foxes and the boar. Therefore, the LORD Himself is our Guardian, and that at all hours, both "night and day." What, then, can harm us? Why are we afraid! He tends, He waters, He guards; what more do we need? Twice in this verse the LORD says, "I will." What truth, what power, what love, what immutability we find in the great "I will" of Jehovah! Who can resist His will? If He says "I will," what room is there for doubt? With an "I will" of God we can face all the hosts of sin, death, and hell. O LORD, since Thou sayest, "I will keep thee," I reply, "I will praise Thee!" - Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook

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In days to come shall Jacob take root; Israel shall blossom and bud; and they shall fill the face of the world with fruit.—Isa. 27.6.

Those "days to come" are within "that day." Here the fact which had been in the mind of the prophet throughout his vision of restoration for the earth comes out into clear declaration. It will be through God's own nation that the nations of the earth will be restored. The figure of the vineyard, of the plant of Jehovah, of the fruit which it is to bear, is employed. Let the mind go back to the earlier song of the vineyard which the prophet had sung (chapter 5). There the vine was seen, failing, bringing forth wild grapes, and given over to processes of judgment. Here, again, we have a song of the vineyard, but now it is a song of fruitfulness. Through the judgments, the glorious results have been realized. The fruit is unquestionably the same—that, namely, of justice and righteousness; and it is seen as filling the face of the world. Thus we have reached the climax in this great prophecy of restoration, and let us make no mistake about it; it will be literally fulfilled. God hath not cast off His ancient people for ever. He is watching over them, and through the long and fiery discipline of these days, He is preparing them for that day when they, cleansed from their pollutions, and restored to His government, shall be the people through which all the blessedness of His reign shall be extended to all the peoples. Jerusalem has long been trodden down of the Gentiles, but the times of the Gentiles are being fulfilled. **Then under the sway of their long rejected Messiah, God's ancient people will fill the face of the world with fruit.** - G Campbell Morgan

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## Isaiah 27 - Spurgeon Expositions

Isa 27:1.

God's laws are not, like cobwebs, meant to catch the little flies while the great ones break through, but he will strike leviathan, he will surely punish the mightiest sinners of the earth.

Isa 27:1. Even leviathan that crooked serpent;  
Hard to come at, difficult to find, he shall not escape the sword of the Lord.

Isa 27:1. And he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.

If men should try to hide from God in hell itself, yet would he find them out; there is no possibility that any offender shall escape his all-seeing eye.

Isa 27:2-3. In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.

Thus the Lord reveals the tenderness of his love to his Church. Then follows a remarkable passage in which, it seems to me, we have the plan of salvation plainly set out. First, here is man at enmity with his Maker.

Isa 27:4. Fury is not in me: who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together.

Men who are at enmity with God little know how terrific is the force of his strength. They are like dry thorns when the fire catches them, and nothing burns more readily. The bush upon the common, when some wild youth sets light to it, suddenly blazes up, crackles, and is gone; so will it be with the ungodly. God has but to go through them, and they shall be destroyed. But now comes a message of mercy.

Isa 27:5. Or let him take hold of my strength,

This is what the repenting and believing sinner does, he lays hold of Christ, he takes the strength of God to be his defense, and then the strong God, instead of being a terror, becomes a comfort to him.

Isa 27:5-6. That he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me. He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take

root:

Taking root should be well looked after by the Christian. Some professors have no root; they are all leaf and flower, but they have no root, and consequently they soon wither and die. Happy is that man who is rooted and grounded in the faith!

Isa 27:6-7. Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit. Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him?

No; God smites his people, but he never smites them as he does their enemies. He smites his people, as old Trapp says, with the palm of his hand, as a man may smite his child; but he smites his enemies with his fist, as one would dash his foe to the ground. There is a great difference between the chastisements of God's people and the righteous judgments that fall upon the wicked.

Isa 27:7-8. Or is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him? In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it:

God always chasteneth his people in measure; he makes a debate about it; he weighs their troubles in scales, and their sorrows in balances.

Isa 27:8. He stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind.

He never sends too many troubles at a time; if the east wind is blowing, he does not send his rough wind. We have much to thank God for, that he times our troubles, had they come an hour before, they might have been too much for us; had they been kept back a week longer, they might have overthrown us. God knoweth when to chasten his people, and he will always chasten them at the right time.

Isa 27:9. By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin;

When one of the old Puritans was afflicted with a very painful disease, —perhaps the most painful to which flesh is heir, — he kept crying out, "The use, Lord? The use, Lord? Show me the use of it." This should be the point at which the Christian should always aim.

Isa 27:9. When he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up.

You see, the Israelites had piled up stones, and held them in veneration, but when God brought them back to himself, they counted those stones to be but as common chalkstones of the valley. It is a good thing for us when our sins bring us no pleasure, when they are only like common stones of the street. When we break our images, and dash down our idol-gods, we show that we prize them no longer. The Lord make this to be the issue of all our trials! Then will we bless him for our troubles so for our chief mercies.

## ISAIAH 28

### Read Isaiah 28:1-6; Isaiah 28-29

Therefore once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder. Isaiah 29:14

Economist Richard Layard believes that although people are getting wealthier and living more comfortably, they're not getting happier. He argues in *Happiness: Lessons From a New Science* that a "zero-sum game of competition for money and status has gripped rich societies, and that this rat race is a big source of unhappiness." Studies show that only about 30 percent of Americans identify themselves as "very happy," a number that has remained constant since the 1950s despite the fact that incomes have doubled (even taking inflation into account).

To judge by actions, consumerism is a cherished value in contemporary American society. Yet trusting in more and better things to make us happy is misplaced trust. Only faith in God can bring meaning to our lives. This is conveyed in today's reading through a message of judgment. Isaiah 28–35 features six judgments in all, and in today's reading we find the first two, aimed at Ephraim (the northern kingdom of Israel) and Jerusalem (the southern kingdom of Judah). The people of Samaria, Israel's capital, were proud, affluent, and pleasure-seeking. They trusted in their own "fading flower" rather than the "beautiful wreath" of God (28:3–5). The people of Jerusalem, similarly, offered insincere worship because of spiritual blindness. They thought their actions could be hidden from God and trusted in themselves rather than their Maker (29:13–15). Both cities stumbled over the spiritual necessities of faith and obedience (28:16; cf. 1 Peter 2:4–8).

Though it seemed "strange" (28:21) for the Lord to announce the defeat and exile of His people, Isaiah obeyed the command to prophesy. Assyria would sweep in like a destructive hailstorm. Israel would be plucked and swallowed like a ripe fig. Unfortunately, the Israelites responded to this warning by mocking Isaiah (28:9–10). Judgment was thus inevitable, but God also promised that later the axe would fall on the Assyrians as well and that days of rejoicing would return (29:18–24).

## APPLY THE WORD

Putting our trust in anything other than God is a losing proposition. Saving faith, on the other hand, promises eternal life in heaven. We say people are “saved” if they believe in the one true God and in the only One who is able to save us from sin—His Son, Jesus Christ. Christ died and rose again to open for us a way to God. If you haven’t yet accepted His gift of salvation, make today the day. And welcome to the family!

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### **Isaiah 28:5 A crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty.**

What many, like the drunkards of Ephraim, as described here, seek in the exhilarating stimulus of wine, God’s people seek and find in Himself! Notice the variety of his attributes. There is something for every one. Are you eager for glory? There is no reputation or fame equal to having his smile, the consciousness of being well pleasing to Him — “He will be a crown of glory.” Do you recognize the deformity and unloveliness of your character, and desire beauty? “He will be a diadem of beauty.” Do you desire a right judgment in all things, so as to be able to direct large and important undertakings? “He will be a spirit of judgment,” when you will be in judgment. Submit your judgment to Him, that He may think through your mind, or direct you to a just conclusion. Are there days when the enemy threaten to carry your soul by assault, and is already at the gates? Then turn to Jesus, and He will be your strength. Yes, and in great crises, when evil is predominant, and the citadel of faith and righteousness threatens to be submerged before the weltering chaos, when no other help is near, as you look to the Captain of the Lord’s Host, you will suddenly find yourself enabled to roll back the dark battalions, in the very hour of victory.

Let us live in closer fellowship with our glorious Lord. They who receive the abundance of his grace shall reign. Out of his fullness may all receive, and grace for grace. “In that day” on Christ’s lips always meant the day of Pentecost; and it is only through the grace of the Holy Spirit that we can avail ourselves of the treasured resources of the Ascended Christ.- F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily  
“He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed.”

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### **Isaiah 28:16 Know How to Wait**

“He that believeth shall not make haste” (Isaiah 28:16).

He shall make haste to keep the LORD's commandments; but he shall not make haste in any impatient or improper sense. He shall not haste to run away, for he shall not be overcome with the fear which causes panic. When others are flying hither and thither as if their wits had failed them, the believer shall be quiet, calm, and deliberate, and so shall be able to act wisely in the hour of trial. He shall not haste in his expectations, craving his good things at once and on the spot, but he will wait God's time. Some are in a desperate hurry to have the bird in the hand, for they regard the LORD's promise as a bird in the bush, not likely to be theirs. Believers know how to wait. . He shall not haste by plunging into wrong or questionable action. Unbelief must be doing something, and thus it works its own undoing; but faith makes no more haste than good speed, and thus it is not forced to go back sorrowfully by the way which it followed heedlessly. How is it with me? Am I believing, and am I therefore keeping to the believer's peace, which is walking with God? Peace, fluttering spirit! Oh, rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him! Heart, see that thou do this at once! - Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook

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For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it; and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.—Isa. 28.20.

These words are vibrant with holy sarcasm. Let us carefully note their setting. With this chapter we find the prophet once more exercising a public ministry. In the section beginning here and ending with Isaiah 33, we have six addresses, each beginning with the word “Woe!” The first five were concerned with the chosen people, and the last with Assyria the threatening foe. The whole section pulsates with the prophet's anger at the false policy which had sought help from Egypt. The outlook of faith as revealed in these discourses was twofold. He saw the real danger in Assyria's advance, and knew that Egypt could not help to avert it. But he also saw Jehovah; and knew that He would deal with Assyria. These two notes alternate in these messages. This chapter is full of dramatic power. Suddenly the prophet broke his long silence and appeared among these politicians, drunk with their own conceits (Isa 28:1-8). They railed on him (Isa 28:9-10). He replied by employing the language of their tauntings (Isa 28:11-13). Then he dealt with the false security in which they were acting. Interpreting their policy as that of a covenant made with death, and an agreement with Sheol, he declared that all such covenants and agreements the Lord Jehovah would disannul. Then he employed these words. They meant that their godless policies were insufficient to give them rest. We may ever employ the suggestive words of nations or of individuals, when attempts are made to find rest and security apart from God. Life cannot stretch itself out in perfect ease upon any other bed than that of the Divine government; life cannot find warmth in any other covering than that of the righteousness of God. - G Campbell Morgan

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## ISAIAH 29

### Isaiah 29:17-24

Once more the humble will rejoice in the LORD; the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. - Isaiah 29:19

#### TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

Robert Bogucki set out last summer to ride his bike across the Great Sandy Desert in western Australia. Two weeks later, his bike and camping gear were found, and a huge search was launched for the 33-year-old American. Australian police called off the search after twelve days. But Bogucki's parents helped fund another search team--and a news helicopter following the searchers later spotted the lost man. Bogucki had been in the desert for forty-three days, surviving by eating plants and drinking muddy water.

We don't know what might have happened if Robert Bogucki's parents had given up hope that their son was still alive. But they would not let Robert go, reaching out to rescue him--just as God reaches out to rescue those He loves.

God's special relationship to His chosen people is clearly demonstrated in His name, ""the Holy One of Israel,"" a God whose holy character demanded holiness from His people. But God identified with His chosen nation even when the people were living in sin and rebellion against Him.

This was the situation described in Isaiah 29. The southern kingdom of Judah was under siege by the great Assyrian king Sennacherib, whose armies had already swept the northern kingdom of Israel into captivity. God delivered Jerusalem from the Assyrians (see Isa. 37:36), but He also warned them that if they did not repent and worship Him in sincerity (Isa 29:11), He would bring judgment.

Placed in the middle of this warning, today's verses are a refreshing promise of blessing for Israel in Christ's kingdom. Notice that the Lord's work in restoring Israel will inspire in the people a desire to keep His name holy, and ""acknowledge the holiness of the Holy One of Jacob"" (v. 23). As believers in Jesus Christ today, we share in the delights of His kingdom. The anticipation of ruling with Christ should produce in us the same desire to honor His holiness by the way we live in this world.

We know that it is God who makes us holy (see the November 2 study). And since we ""participate in the divine nature"" (2Pe 1:4-note), we have the capacity to honor Him through holy living.

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

How do we know when our daily lives are reflecting the kind of holiness God's holy character demands? There's no quick and easy answer to that question, but it's worth some effort. Try this experiment. Write down three or four key areas of life, such as marriage, family, work, personal life, etc. Beside each category jot down several attitudes or actions that you feel would be characteristic of a holy life. Then take a ""mini-retreat"" with the Lord today. Read His Word, and pray to Him for His strength in pursuing holiness.

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### Isaiah 29:19 The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord.

"Blessed are the meek," "Blessed are the poor in spirit," said the Lord. What is meekness, and why are meek and poor men so signally blessed with joy? Meekness is different from lowliness and humility. It is our attitude in the presence of our detractors and persecutors — not retaliating, nor opposing force to force, but bowing in silence and submission before high-handed wrong. It was in such a spirit of meekness that Jesus suffered Himself to be led as a lamb to the slaughter; and instead of calling for legions of angels, suffered Caiaphas' armed band to bind Him. This spirit is not natural to us. It is in our nature to retaliate and avenge ourselves. We want to call for fire, or legions of armored angels from the heaven of God. But this is not the way of peace or joy.

But the Holy Spirit waits to reproduce in us the meekness of Jesus. Then, when you meet all injury and unkindness with an unfailing Christian courtesy, bending like a rush before the storm, to rise when it has passed over, you will have joy. Joy, because God will comfort you: because you have not lost yourself in the heat of passion, but have tried to turn others away from their evil purpose: because your hands could not have vindicated or extricated yourself, as God's have: and because you realize that the passive virtues are stronger, and the patience of Jesus Christ will win the kingdom. Those who fret and fume and storm through life, always standing on their rights, and insisting on being respected and consulted, are in perpetual perturbation. But the meek inherit the earth. All the best comes to them at last. God makes them his special charge. And as they tread the path of Jesus, they share his joy. - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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Their fear of Me is a commandment of men which hath been taught them. —Isa. 29.13.

In this chapter we have the second and third of the "Woe" messages of the prophet. The first was a condemnation of the city of



Jerusalem, addressed as Ariel, for its frivolity and debauchery; but also a declaration that Jehovah would proceed against the foes of His people. The second was a condemnation of the politicians who imagined they could work in the dark, without God knowing; and a fore-telling concerning a day in which Jehovah would demonstrate His power gloriously. The words we have stressed occur in the first of these, and are part of a searching criticism of the religious condition of the people. They were maintaining the out-ward forms of religion, but there was alienation from God, in all the deepest things of their lives. These particular words show that it is possible to have a fear of God, which results from receiving "a commandment of men." This fear is valueless, because even though the commandment so taught may in itself harmonize with the law of God, it is of no value save as it is a direct Word of God to the one upon whom it is laid. Thus a principle emerges which is of perpetual force in vital religion. It is that man must have direct dealing with God. None of us can possibly know the authority of the Bible if he merely receive and respect it, because it is given to him by his father. To accept a rule of life, because it is given by a man, however true the rule, however good the man, is to be without the element of real value in the acceptance. It is by the Word of God that man lives; and that word must be a direct word. Let those who are called upon to teach that Word recognize the necessity for withdrawing themselves from between those whom they teach and the word which they proclaim. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 30

### Isaiah 32:1-8

Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal. - Isaiah 26:4

#### TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

The office of prophet was instituted during the days of Samuel, the last of the judges around 700 b.c. Prophets were God's special representatives, called to speak for God. They warned the people to turn from lives of sin or face God's judgment and punishment. Although Isaiah is often considered to be the greatest prophet, his message went unheeded by most who heard it in his day.

Certainly the people of Isaiah's day longed for rulers who were righteous and just--they had suffered under so many immoral and corrupt kings. We can understand this; in recent months our news headlines have been filled with stories of leaders--business, political, and religious--who have betrayed trust and acted immorally. We can see the pain and devastation that bad leaders bring, and we, too, long for righteous and just leadership.

Because Jesus came, we can find a shelter in the storms of life (Isa 34:2). And as He reigns in our lives, we are able to provide a refuge for others, and we can see the righteousness that we were once unable to grasp (Isa 32:3).

Those of us who have believed in the saving work Christ accomplished on earth can see how Jesus transforms the blind into seeing, the rash into reasonable, the stammerers into fluent speakers. We may even have experienced such a dramatic transformation at our own conversion. But as we look around our world, we don't see these characteristics everywhere as Isaiah seems to indicate we should.

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

As the overhanging rock offers refreshing shade and shelter to the weary desert traveler, the power, truth, and love of Jesus offers us today, as believers, protection and refreshment during the difficult journey we walk.

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### Isaiah 30:7 Their strength is to sit still.

The still and quiet soul is like a ship that lies quiet in the harbor: you may take in what goods you please whilst the ship lies still. So, when the soul lies quiet under the hand of God, it is most fitted to take in much of God, of Christ, of heaven, of the promises, and of ordinances; but, when souls are unquiet, they are like a ship in a storm: they can take in nothing. BROOKS.

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### Isaiah 30:15 A Quiet Heart

"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (Isaiah 30:15).

It is always weakness to be fretting and worrying, questioning and mis-trusting. What can we do if we wear ourselves to skin and bone? Can we gain anything by fearing and fuming? Do we not unfit ourselves for action and unhinge our minds for wise decision? We are sinking by our struggles when we might float by faith. Oh, for grace to be quiet! Why run from house to house to repeat the weary story which makes us more and more heart-sick as we tell it? Why even stay at home to cry out in agony because of wretched forebodings which may never be fulfilled? It would be well to keep a quiet tongue, but it would be far better if we had a quiet heart.

Oh, to be still and know that Jehovah is God! Oh, for grace to be confident in God! The holy One of Israel must defend and deliver His own. He cannot run back from His solemn declarations. We may make sure that every word of His will stand though the mountains should depart. He deserves to be confided in; and if we would display confidence and consequent quietness, we might be as happy as the spirits before the throne. Come, my soul, return unto thy rest, and lean thy head upon the bosom of the LORD Jesus. - Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook

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### **Isaiah 30:15 QUIETNESS AND CONFIDENCE.**

"In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." This is a truth concerning all the trials and troubles of this life. Some of you are passing through business troubles, for there are many tremors in the business world, and perhaps they are causing you to shake and tremble. If so, do not be readily carried away by these secondary matters. Do not let them depress or excite you. Hold loosely to all worldly things, but grip firmly the unseen God. Fussing, worrying, and hurrying will do no good. Be calm and quiet; all will be well if you are the Lord's child.

Perhaps your trial is personal sickness. If so, nothing can be better than quietness and confidence. Worrying will not make you well, though it might keep you ill. You will be sick just as long as God appoints, but if anything can help to heal it is quietness and confidence of heart.

Have you lost a friend? Is there a great sorrow? Have you some loved one lying in a new grave? My friend, you cannot bring the dear one back, and you should not wish to do so. It is wise to submit to the inevitable. It is gracious to bow to the will of your ever-gracious God. You cannot do anything that will be as helpful to your sorrowing spirit as to exercise quietness and confidence; it will indeed be your strength.

Do you have a sorrow fully equal to bereavement? Have you a loved one who daily suffers? Is that the living cross you have to carry? Do not worry. Submit to the Lord's will. Ask Him for grace to acquiesce in it, and learn to wait on the Lord.

God's tested child, whatever your condition, remember this promise, "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." - C H Spurgeon - "Beside Still Waters"

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### **Isaiah 30:15. In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.**

In all the departments of life it is the quiet forces that effect most. The sunbeams fall all day long, silently, unheard by human ear; yet there is in them a wondrous energy and a great power for blessing and good. Gravitation is a silent force, with no rattle of machinery, no noise of engines, no clanking of chains, and yet it holds all the stars and worlds in their orbits and swings them through space with unvarying precision. The dew falls silently at night when men sleep and yet it touches every plant and leaf and flower with new life and beauty. It is in the lightning, not in the thunder-peal, that the electric energy resides. Thus even in nature, strength lies in quietness and the mightiest energies work noiselessly. J. R. MILLER.

God often encourages the weak in faith by giving speedy answers to prayer; but the strong in faith will be tested by God's delays.

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### **Isaiah 30:18 Therefore will the Lord wait, that He may be gracious unto you.**

As long as the people tried to help themselves, sending ambassadors to Egypt, and seeking an alliance against the invader, God could do nothing for them; He could only wait until they returned to simple reliance upon Himself. In returning to trust and rest they would be saved. At first they said No. They were opposed to the idea of simple trust in God. It seemed impossible to believe that if they simply rested on Him He would do better for them than their most strenuous exertions could do for themselves. And all the while God was waiting till every expedient failed, and they were reduced to such a condition that He could step in and save them.

How like this is to much in our lives! It is long before we learn the lesson of returning and rest; of quietness and confidence. We will trust in chariots and horses, and ride upon the swift. It is, of course, right to use the means; but our strong temptation is to put them in the place of God, and trust them. You are trying to save yourself from the just penalty of your sin, from the pursuit of your foes, from perplexing combinations and complications of circumstances; you have been running backwards and forwards, flurried and excited. At how many doors you have knocked to find them closed; and all the while God has been waiting to be gracious to you, waiting till you came to the end of yourself; waiting, till like a spent struggler in the water, you ceased from your mad efforts and cast yourself back upon his strong everlasting love. He is exalted to have mercy; but He is a God of judgment, or literally, of method. He can only save in one way. Blessed are they that wait for Him. The soul that waits for God will always find the God for whom he waits. F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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But ye said, No, for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift.—Isa. 30.16.

This is the fourth "Woe" message, and it was specifically concerned with the treaty actually made with Egypt, and in the making of



which the nation was definitely and distinctly rebellious against Jehovah. In their turning to Egypt, there was evidence of their lack of trust in God; but in their persistence in this course, and the consummation of the policy in the actual treaty—in spite of the prophetic warnings—there was more than lack of confidence, there was positive rebellion. Very well, said the prophet, so be it, for so it must be. The Lord Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, had declared the way of deliverance and safety; "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength." But they had said "No!" They had elected to flee, that is at the enemy, on horses, the horses obtained from Egypt. Very well, said the prophet, you shall have your own way—you shall flee—only it shall not be at the enemy, but from the enemy. They had said: "We will ride upon the swift." Very well, said the prophet, then ride—only those who pursue will also be swift. Thus it ever is. If we will not have God's way, He compels us to take our own; and by the experience resulting, we learn our folly. Thus—as the next verse shows—Jehovah has to wait to be gracious. If in our folly we refuse His way, then He compels us to take our own, and He waits until the disaster of our choice has taught us the folly of that choice. In this connection, observe the last words of the prophet, "Blessed are all they that wait for Him;" that is, those who do not make Him wait for them. - G Campbell Morgan

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### **Isaiah 30:18 "Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you."**

God often DELAYS IN ANSWERING PRAYER. We have several instances of this in sacred Scripture. Jacob did not get the blessing from the angel until near the dawn of day—he had to wrestle all night for it. The poor woman of Syrophenicia was answered not a word for a long while. Paul besought the Lord thrice that "the thorn in the flesh" might be taken from him, and he received no assurance that it should be taken away, but instead thereof a promise that God's grace should be sufficient for him. If thou hast been knocking at the gate of mercy, and hast received no answer, shall I tell thee why the mighty Maker hath not opened the door and let thee in? Our Father has reasons peculiar to himself for thus keeping us waiting. Sometimes it is to show his power and his sovereignty, that men may know that Jehovah has a right to give or to withhold. More frequently the delay is for our profit. Thou art perhaps kept waiting in order that thy desires may be more fervent. God knows that delay will quicken and increase desire, and that if he keeps thee waiting thou wilt see thy necessity more clearly, and wilt seek more earnestly; and that thou wilt prize the mercy all the more for its long tarrying. There may also be something wrong in thee which has need to be removed, before the joy of the Lord is given. Perhaps thy views of the Gospel plan are confused, or thou mayest be placing some little reliance on thyself, instead of trusting simply and entirely to the Lord Jesus. Or, God makes thee tarry awhile that he may the more fully display the riches of his grace to thee at last. Thy prayers are all filed in heaven, and if not immediately answered they are certainly not forgotten, but in a little while shall be fulfilled to thy delight and satisfaction. Let not despair make thee silent, but continue instant in earnest supplication. - Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

## **ISAIAH 31**

### **Isaiah 31:5 As birds flying, so will the Lord of Hosts protect Jerusalem. (R.V.).**

It was a beautiful conception, for Jerusalem was perched on Mount Zion, as some bird's nest in the cleft of the rocks. Lo! Sennacherib approaches as the hawk, hovering above the fledglings of the nest. But just as the mother-bird gathers her young under her wing, and places herself between her treasures and threatening peril, so would the eternal God spread those wings, under which Ruth came to trust in the old time, over the entire city. To Isaiah there was no cause for fear when Sennacherib's legions were encamped on the mountains of Zion. He, at least, realized that the pinions of Almighty were between the cowering citizens and the dreaded foe. Warm and safe was such abiding.

How wonderful that Jesus should have appropriated this metaphor, and spoken of Himself as willing to gather Jerusalem under his wing to save her from a more terrible fate! Does it not bespeak his consciousness of Deity that He should hide the people under the shadow of his care?

This may be our daily portion. The Lord of Hosts will be strong as the lion that growls over his prey, undismayed by the multitude of shepherds that shout at him; and He will be sweet and soft and gentle as a mother-bird. Always believe that Jesus stands between you and what you dread. Even now He is passing over you. Do you not hear Him saying, "If you seek Me, let these go their way"? Isaac Pennington, an old follower of George Fox, who had considerable experience of the prisons of his time, said he often felt the healing drop from the wings of Christ. The sense of God's presence and of his power are as two wings, beneath which the believer nestles, till calamities be overpast. - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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When the Lord shall stretch out His hand, both he that helpeth shall stumble, and he that is helped shall fall, and they all shall fall together.—Isa. 31.3.

In the fifth "Woe" message, the prophetic word insists upon the government of God; and alternates between words which show the punitive, and the restoring elements in the activity of that government. Here the treaty with Egypt was consummated, and the

politicians were confident in the multitude of the chariots and the strength of the horsemen. The prophet revealed the folly of the confidence, as he said that the Egyptians were men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. In this word he recognized the fact that man's true resources are not found in man, but in God; that the strength which accomplishes is not carnal, but spiritual. Then in these words he asserted the fact which he saw clearly. All the cleverness of human arrangements was of no avail. Egypt was to help; Judah was to be helped. Everything was arranged. But those making the arrangement had, in their calculations, left out the one supreme quantity. Jehovah would stretch out His hand. Then Egypt, the helper, would stumble; and Judah, the helped, would fall; and they would all fall together. Thus, with almost monotonous reiteration, the same fact of the Divine sovereignty, and of its activity in all human affairs is insisted on. And this is the one truth which humanity needs to learn, and learning which, it finds the only wisdom, for the ordering of its affairs. The whole of human history testifies to the stupidity of man when he trusts to his diplomacies, and fails to reckon with God. This is no old-story merely. It is as modern as 1914-1919. We then saw the hand of Jehovah stretched out, and the helper and the helped go down in confusion. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 32

### **Isaiah 32:17 The work of righteousness shall be peace.**

Righteousness must precede peace. In the government of a Holy God. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews clearly affirms that Melchizedek, the type of Christ, is first King of Righteousness and then King of Peace. In Romans 3 the apostle shows how the righteousness of God has been vindicated, and will be imparted to those that believe; and then says, "Being justified,... let us have peace with God."

In our inner life. Many seek for peace apart from righteousness. They refuse to adjust some wrong in their lives which calls aloud against them. They refuse to permit the light of God's Spirit to ransack their past, because they are conscious that to do so will expose themselves to the inevitable need of confession and restitution; and as they will not submit to the laying of the foundations of peace, they miss the peace. So far as you know, you must be right, before you can have peace.

In men's dealings with each other. Be sure to go to the bottom of disputes and disagreements. There is a right and a wrong in every question. It is always wise to lay the foundations of justice at any cost, assured that peace will inevitably result sooner or later. Honeyed words will not abide; but just deeds are a permanent basis for a happy and lasting reconciliation.

How blessed that for evermore our peace is secured! The righteous shall never need to leave their peaceful habitation, or to quit their sure dwellings. However it may hail to the downfall of the forest trees, storms shall never drive them from their quiet resting-places, since they are founded upon the righteousness as well as the grace of God.

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### **Isaiah 32:2 WATER IN A DRY PLACE.**

Are your outward circumstances dry? Are you rich? Wealthy society is generally as dry as the granite hills. Gold and gospel seldom agree. Are you poor? Poverty is a dry place to those who are not rich in faith. Are you engaged in business? How often does its problems parch your soul? To rise up early and toil late amid losses and crosses is to dwell in a dry place.

Oh to feel the love of Christ flowing! This is to have "rivers of water." True religion is to have Christ when you are losing money, when checks bounce, and when banks fail. It is sweet to be able to rejoice in Christ even when you are out of work, to have Christ even when your wife is sick, to have Christ even when your precious child has to be buried, to have Christ when your head is aching, to have Christ when your poor body is half starved.

You will never know the sweetness of Christ until you know the bitterness of trials. You cannot know His fullness until you see your emptiness. I pray that it may be your experience to always feel that you are going down and Christ is going up, to become poorer and poorer apart from Him, while knowing more and more of the priceless riches which are yours in Christ Jesus. Christ will be dearer and dearer as you have less and less esteem of yourself.

Christ is "rivers of water in a dry place" (Is. 32:2). "He who believes in Me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). - C H Spurgeon in "Beside Still Waters"

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### **Read Isaiah 32:1-8; Isaiah 30-33**

### **The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever. Isaiah 32:17**

America's best-selling board game for more than seventy years has been Monopoly. Since 1935, the game has sold more than 200 million editions around the world. Perhaps you've known the predatory satisfaction of building hotels on Park Place and the Boardwalk, or the dismay of "Go directly to jail, do not pass Go, do not collect \$200." The game's Web site says the longest Monopoly game ever played lasted more than 70 days!

From one point of view, Monopoly is simply fun and entertaining. From another point of view, it teaches greed, materialism, and

selfishness. As we saw yesterday, we dare not put our trust in such things. In today's reading, we find additional judgments on people whose faith was not in the Lord, but there is also an encouraging word about a "king of righteousness" and future blessings.

Who gets judged? First, people who rely on human wisdom rather than God's wisdom. "Woe to the obstinate children ... who carry out plans that are not mine" (30:1). They wish for pleasant things and "prophesy illusions" (30:10). Second, people who rely on human strength rather than God's strength. "Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help ... who trust in the multitude of their chariots" (31:1). Isaiah was talking mainly to Israel, urging the nation to stop trusting in straw and repent. A third "woe" was for Assyria—the destroyer would itself be destroyed.

Through all this, God was faithful and loving and had good things in store for His people. A king of righteousness, the Messiah, is described in chapter 32. He will be holy and just. Peace and truth will flourish under His reign. When His Spirit is poured out, a new age will begin (32:15). That's why the prophet can say: "He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure" (33:6).

#### APPLY THE WORD

Are you going through tough days? Do things seem dark, desperate, or hopeless? We encourage you to pray a prayer from today's reading that seems written especially for such times: "O Lord, be gracious to us; we long for you. Be our strength every morning, our salvation in time of distress" (33:2). Then say to yourself what the psalmist said: "Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him" (Ps. 42:5).

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#### **Isaiah 32:20. Sow beside all waters.**

Never mind whereabouts your work Isaiah Never mind whether it be visible or no. Never mind whether your name is associated with it. You may never see the issues of your toils. You are working for eternity.... If you cannot see results here in the hot working day, the cool evening hours are drawing near, when you may rest from your labors, and then they will follow you. So do your duty, and trust God to give the seed you sow "a body as it hath pleased Him." - Alexander Maclaren

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And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and confidence for ever. —Isa. 32.17.

In this chapter we have the second part of the fifth "Woe" message concerning the chosen. It is principally concerned with the conditions which will obtain when the reign of righteousness is established. In the midst of this graphic description the prophet made another appeal to the women. In the earlier days of his ministry he had addressed them with grave solemnity, recognizing their influences for evil in the counsels of the rulers (Isa 3.16, Isa 3:26). Now, he called upon them to lament at the desolations threatening the city and the nation. The burden of the prophet here, however, was as we have said, that of the glory of the Messianic reign. The words we have emphasized should be read in close connection with the opening declaration of this part of the message: "Behold a King shall reign in righteousness." The processes of righteousness, in the midst of lawlessness, are necessarily those of wrath and a curse, of the storm and the tempest; but the work of righteousness, that is its ultimate result, is peace, and its effect is quietness and confidence. These are the conditions of true joy, and lasting happiness. Peace is impossible so long as righteousness is disregarded; quietness and confidence can never be produced by unrighteous motives and methods. Such a conviction involves another. Righteousness will never be the principle of human life, unless and until that life is submitted to the King Who reigns in righteousness; and there is no king who perfectly reigns in righteousness other than the Man Whom God bath appointed to judge the world in righteousness. He is the Man Who will be as the shade of a great rock in a weary land. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 33

#### **Isaiah 33:2 Be Thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble.**

This is an exquisite morning prayer, and the beauty of it is that it is so sweetly unselfish. It begins by appealing for the grace of God, but goes on to ask that He would be as an arm of loving support and deliverance to others, before the suppliant turns back to ask for salvation for himself in time of trouble. "Be Thou their arm;... our salvation also." If you want God's arm for yourself, ask that it may be given to some one else. If you want salvation in the time of trouble, pray that God would give his arm for the help of your neighbor.

We all want that arm every morning. The gladdest, fairest day that ever broke for us, or will break, must have been marked, or will be marked, by pitfalls and snares. The path may begin with greensward; but before the evening it will have opened upon stones and steep ascents, and you will need the arm of your Beloved on which to lean. But you will never ask for it in vain. It will be always at hand. Be sure, like the Shulamite, to come up out of the wilderness, leaning on your Beloved. And whatever else you forget in your morning prayer, never forget to ask for the strong, tender arm of God. O woman, bereaved of the strong arm on which thou wert

wont to lean, will not this suffice thee!

Is not this a comprehensive prayer for dear ones far away or near? Be their arm, Heavenly Father, today. If I may not be there to give the strength of my arm, let thine be their stay, and Thou wilt do better than had been possible, had I been by their side. Then, when the hour of trouble comes, and you ask that He should be your salvation, the glorious Lord will be a place of broad rivers and streams. - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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### **Isaiah 33:10 God Himself Shall Work**

"Now will I rise, saith the LORD; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up Myself" (Isaiah 33:10).

When the spoilers had made the land as waste as if devoured by locusts, and the warriors who had defended the country sat down and wept like women, then the LORD came to the rescue. When travelers ceased from the roads to Zion, and Bashan and Carmel were as vineyards from which the fruit has failed, then the LORD arose. God is exalted in the midst of an afflicted people, for they seek His face and trust Him. He is still more exalted when in answer to their cries He lifts up Himself to deliver them and overthrow their enemies. Is it a day of sorrow with us? Let us expect to see the LORD glorified in our deliverance. Are we drawn out in fervent prayer? Do we cry day and night unto Him? Then the set time for His grace is near. God will lift up Himself at the right season. He will arise when it will be most for the display of His glory. We wish for His glory more than we long for our own deliverance. Let the LORD be exalted, and our chief desire is obtained. LORD, help us in such a way that we may see that Thou Thyself art working. May we magnify Thee in our inmost souls. Make all around us to see how good and great a God Thou art. - Spurgeon -Faith's Checkbook

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### **Isaiah 33:16 He shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks.**

I remember a story in Alexander's wars, that when he came to besiege the Sogdians, a people who dwelt upon a rock, or had the literal munition of rocks for their defence, they jeered him and asked him whether his soldiers had wings or no. "Unless your soldiers can fly in the air, we fear you not." It is a most certain truth, when God exalts a people, He can set them upon a rock so high that, unless their adversaries have wings, and those more than eagles' wings, to soar higher than God himself, they are beyond annoyance. He carries His own upon eagles' wings; what wings, then, must they have who get above His people. CARYL.

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### **Isaiah 33:16 - HAS HIS PROMISE FAILED?**

Psalm 77:8

When you are in distress, take a promise and see if it is true. If you have nothing to eat, take this promise: "Bread will be given him, his water will be sure" (Is. 33:16). When there is nothing in the kitchen, say, "I will see if God will keep this promise." If He does, do not forget it. Set it down in your diary, or mark it in your Bible. Be like the old saint who put T and P beside the promises. She told her pastor that it meant tried and proven. When she was again in distress, she believed that God would help.

There is a promise that says, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). Take that and prove it! When you have, make a mark and say, "This I know is true, for I have proven it." There is nothing in the world that can confirm faith like proof.

"What I want," said one, "are the facts." So it is with Christians. We want facts that make us believe. The older you grow, the stronger your faith should be. Then you will have many more facts to buttress your faith and compel your belief in God. When you reach seventy years, what a pile of evidence you will have accumulated if you have kept a record of all of God's providential goodness and lovingkindness.

I can bear willing testimony to His faithfulness. Not one good thing has failed of all that the Lord has promised! Every example of God's love should make us believe Him more. As we see the fulfillment of each promise, it compels us to say, "God has kept His promises and will keep them to the end."

The worst is that we forget. Then we will have no more faith than when we started, for we will have forgotten God's repeated answers. Though He has fulfilled the promises, we have buried them in forgetfulness. - Spurgeon - Beside Still Waters, Clarke, Roy H. Editor

....Because I am His child, He will feed me; bread will be given, and my water will be sure (Is. 33:16). He that feeds the birds will never let His children starve (Matt. 6:26). If a good farmer feeds the barnyard hens, the sheep, and the cattle, certainly God will not let His children starve.

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### **Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?—Isa 33.14.**

This sixth and last of the "Woe" messages in this series has to do with Assyria. It is a singularly exalted prophecy. The cruelty and strength of the foe is recognized and graphically described. In presence of such a foe the nation of Judah is hopeless and helpless

in its own strength. Then the word of Jehovah is heard: "Now will I arise . . . now will I lift up Myself; now will I be exalted." Then the outlook changes. All the force of the foe is as nothing in the presence of the fire of the Divine wrath. It is this vision which gives rise to these questions. Note, they are asked by dwellers in Zion, who are sinners. They fear and tremble for themselves. The whole conception is a revelation of the prophet's outlook upon the world. He saw everything in the fire of the Divine holiness. In that fire only things of essential purity and strength could live. Let it be noted that these questions are immediately answered. Those who can dwell in that fire, and not be consumed, are described in the next verse. Those who are righteous, alone can dwell with the everlasting burnings. This is a true vision of the world. It is wrapt in the fire of the presence of God. That fire is surely, if with apparent slowness, destroying everything which is out of harmony with eternal purity. In Nature there is such a slow burning fire. Scientists call it *eremacausis*. It is seen in the tints of autumn, and in the rust. Its function is that of destroying effete things. What that fire is to Nature. God is to human history and life. - G Campbell Morgan

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### **Isaiah 33:14–16, Hebrews 12:29 Do Not Dread God's Consuming Fire**

If God accepts your sacrifice, it will all be consumed by His fire. See, the accepted sacrifice is all gone; it is utterly consumed. When God enables us to serve Him, and takes away from us all self-congratulation, we ought to be very thankful. This proves that it is all burned with fire. If God had not accepted it, then we might have reserved portions of it for ourselves on which to feed our vanity, and that would be to feed ourselves without fear. But if the Lord has taken every morsel from the mouth of self, we have great cause for rejoicing. If the Lord accepts us, His fire will consume us; the zeal of His house will eat us up.

When we go home to the Lord above, we do not dread His presence, though He is a consuming fire. Those whom He has purified and made white are not afraid of the flames of His holiness. Remember that blessed text, "Who of us can live with devouring fire? Who of us can live with everlasting consuming hearths? He who walks in righteousness and speaks uprightness, who rejects the gain of extortion, who refuses a bribe, who stops up his ears from hearing bloodshed and shuts his eyes from seeing evil. That one will live on the heights" (Isa 33:14–16). It shall be the glory of the gracious and the true that God is their element. It shall be their bliss to live in the full splendor of His perfect holiness. They shall be like their Lord, for they shall see Him as He is. Everything that is holy will endure the fire, and as for all within us that is impure, let it be consumed speedily. So let us serve the Lord with fear, but not with terror, and let this service be continued all our days. Let us bring our sacrifices to Him, with repentance for every fault, humbly pleading that of His grace He will accept it, and earnestly desiring that all we have done may resound to His glory through Jesus Christ His Son, to whom be honor, world without end. - Spurgeon

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### **Isaiah 33:15–16 The rocky fortress (and its inhabitant)**

'He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks.' Isaiah 33:15–16

I leave to others the task of showing the beauty of groaning, or the delightfulness of murmuring: it is mine to urge you to shake yourselves from the dust, and put on your beautiful garments. Why are you so cast down? Dear people of God, you go out in the streets in rags, and yet you have royal robes provided for you; why do you not put them on? 'Oh,' say you, 'but I have great sorrow.' Yes, but it is written, 'As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.' Why tell everybody of your grief? Is there any good to be done thereby? What does our Lord say? 'But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast.' It is a Christian's duty to be happy. What a blessed religion is that in which joy is a matter of precept—'Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.' I have been so long away from England that I do not know where our Queen is residing just now; but if I had the wings of a dove, and could mount into the upper air, I would soon find out. I should look for the Royal Standard. I should see it floating over Windsor or Osborne, and by this token I should espy the royal abode. Fling out the banner to the breeze when the king is within. Is the king at home with you, dear brother? Do not forget to display the standard of holy joy. Hoist it, and keep it flying. When the Bridegroom is not with us we will mourn; but so long as we see his face no man can make us fast. Rejoice, and yet again rejoice, and thus let the Royal Standard fly at the top of the tower: the King is within us! The Prince of Peace is enthroned in our hearts! - 365 Days with Spurgeon (Vol 5)

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### **Isaiah 33:15 FAITH—the Summary of Virtue.**

The Jews in the Talmud have the saying, "The whole law was given to Moses at Sinai, in six hundred and thirteen precepts." David, in the fifteenth Psalm, brings them all within the compass of eleven. Isaiah brings them to six, Isaiah 33:15; Micah to three, Micah 6:8; Isaiah, again, to two, Isaiah 56; Habakkuk to this one, "The just shall live by faith." Habakkuk 2:4—Lightfoot - Spurgeon's Feathers for Arrows

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### **Isaiah 33:16 High Places of Defense**

"He shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure" (Isaiah 33:16).

The man to whom God has given grace to be of blameless life dwells in perfect security. He dwells on high, above the world, Out of gunshot of the enemy, and near to heaven. He has high aims and motives, and he finds high comforts and company. He rejoices in the mountains of eternal love, wherein he has his abode. He is defended by munitions of stupendous rock. The firmest things in the universe are the promises and purposes of the unchanging God, and these are the safeguard of the obedient believer. He is provided for by this great promise: "Bread shall be given him." As the enemy cannot climb the fort, nor break down the rampart, so the fortress cannot be captured by siege and famine. The LORD, who rained manna in the wilderness, will keep His people in good store even when they are surrounded by those who would starve them. But what if water should fail? That cannot be. "His waters shall be sure." There is a never-failing well within the impregnable fortress. The LORD sees that nothing is wanting. None can touch the citizen of the true Zion. However fierce the enemy, the LORD will preserve His chosen. - Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook

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**Isaiah 33:16 "His place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure."**

Do you doubt, O Christian, do you doubt as to whether God will fulfil his promise? Shall the munitions of rock be carried by storm? Shall the storehouses of heaven fail? Do you think that your heavenly Father, though he knoweth that you have need of food and raiment, will yet forget you? When not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father, and the very hairs of your head are all numbered, will you mistrust and doubt him? Perhaps your affliction will continue upon you till you dare to trust your God, and then it shall end. Full many there be who have been tried and sore vexed till at last they have been driven in sheer desperation to exercise faith in God, and the moment of their faith has been the instant of their deliverance; they have seen whether God would keep his promise or not. Oh, I pray you, doubt him no longer! Please not Satan, and vex not yourself by indulging any more those hard thoughts of God. Think it not a light matter to doubt Jehovah. Remember, it is a sin; and not a little sin either, but in the highest degree criminal. The angels never doubted him, nor the devils either: we alone, out of all the beings that God has fashioned, dishonour him by unbelief, and tarnish his honour by mistrust. Shame upon us for this! Our God does not deserve to be so basely suspected; in our past life we have proved him to be true and faithful to his word, and with so many instances of his love and of his kindness as we have received, and are daily receiving, at his hands, it is base and inexcusable that we suffer a doubt to sojourn within our heart. May we henceforth wage constant war against doubts of our God—enemies to our peace and to his honour; and with an unstaggering faith believe that what he has promised he will also perform. "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." - Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

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**Isaiah 33:16**

God's people often find by experience that the places of their protection are places of destruction. Well, when all other places fail, Christ will not fail. See how it was with David, Ps. 142:4, 5. But when his hiding-place at Ziklag was gone, yet his Saviour was not gone; "He encouraged himself in the Lord his God": 1 Sam. 30:6. It is a mighty encouragement to believers that Christ is a hiding-place. 1. He is a safe and strong hiding-place: Isa. 33:16; Christ is a rock, and he that is in Christ is in the munitions of rocks. 2. He is a large hiding-place; there is room enough for his elect; his skirt is large. 3. He is a hiding-place to the soul as well as to the body. 4. He hath undertaken to hide us; God hath committed all his elect to Christ, that He should hide them.—Ralph Robinson.

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**Isaiah 33:17 "Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty."**

The more you know about Christ the less will you be satisfied with superficial views of him; and the more deeply you study his transactions in the eternal covenant, his engagements on your behalf as the eternal Surety, and the fulness of his grace which shines in all his offices, the more truly will you see the King in his beauty. Be much in such outlooks. Long more and more to see Jesus. Meditation and contemplation are often like windows of agate, and gates of carbuncle, through which we behold the Redeemer. Meditation puts the telescope to the eye, and enables us to see Jesus after a better sort than we could have seen him if we had lived in the days of his flesh. Would that our conversation were more in heaven, and that we were more taken up with the person, the work, the beauty of our incarnate Lord. More meditation, and the beauty of the King would flash upon us with more resplendence. Beloved, it is very probable that we shall have such a sight of our glorious King as we never had before, when we come to die. Many saints in dying have looked up from amidst the stormy waters, and have seen Jesus walking on the waves of the sea, and heard him say, "It is I, be not afraid." Ah, yes! when the tenement begins to shake, and the clay falls away, we see Christ through the rifts, and between the rafters the sunlight of heaven comes streaming in. But if we want to see face to face the "King in his beauty" we must go to heaven for the sight, or the King must come here in person. O that he would come on the wings of the wind! He is our Husband, and we are widowed by his absence; he is our Brother dear and fair, and we are lonely without him. Thick veils and clouds hang between our souls and their true life: when shall the day break and the shadows flee away? Oh, long-expected day, begin! -Spurgeon - Morning and evening

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### **Isaiah 33:17 - The king in his beauty**

'Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.' Isaiah 33:17

Some of the worst of tyrants have delighted to call themselves kings by divine right, emperors by the will of God, monarchs by the grace of God, and the like. It may be so; I doubt not that many of earth's tyrants require much grace, lest their crimes should bring them to speedy ruin; and doubtless it is sometimes the will of God to inflict great scourges upon guilty nations; but, my brethren, Jesus Christ is no despotic claimant of divine right, but he is really and truly the Lord's Anointed! 'For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell'. God has given to him all power and authority. As the Son of man, he is now head over all things to his church, and he reigns over heaven, earth and hell with the keys of life and death at his girdle; 'and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.' We recognise him as King by divine right. We see in him most clearly that true deity which 'doth hedge a king,' and meekly we bow before him whom God has appointed 'to be a Prince and a Saviour' to give repentance and forgiveness of sins. Certain princes have delighted to call themselves kings by the popular will, and certainly our Lord Jesus Christ is such in his church. If it could be put to the vote whether he should be King in the church, every believing heart would crown him. O that we could crown him more gloriously than we do! We should count no expense to be wasted that could glorify Christ. Suffering should be pleasure, and loss should be gain, if thereby we could surround his brow with brighter crowns and make him more glorious in the eyes of men and angels. Yes, he shall reign. Long live the King! All hail to thee, King Jesus! - 365 Days with Spurgeon (Vol 3)

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**Isaiah 33:21.** Jerusalem lacked a river, and nearly all large cities are built on seas or rivers. The Lord promised to be a river without the drawback that enemies' vessels could come up against the city. So there is no drawback, no temptation in any blessing the Lord gives. - D L Moody

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### **Isaiah 33:20–22 Broad rivers and streams**

'Look upon Zion ... thine eyes shall see Jerusalem ... there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us.' Isaiah 33:20–22

In 1588, when the Armada sailed towards Britain, God blew with his winds and all Spain's mighty hosts were broken, and God's favoured isle was free. We were doubtless spared the horrors of war under Napoleon because of the Channel. It was especially so in the old times of ancient warfare; then a narrow trench was almost as useful as a broad channel would be now, for they had no ready means of crossing, though on old Assyrian sculptures we see galleys with oars crossing over rivers, and we have one or two sculptures, I believe, in the British Museum, of the Assyrian king turning the river into another channel so that he might the more easily take the city. But still, rivers were for a defence. O beloved, what a defence is God to his church! Ah, the devil cannot cross this broad river of God. Between me and you, O fiend of hell, is my God. Do remember this, Christian; between you and your arch-enemy is your God; Satan has to stand on the other side, and how he wishes he could dry up that stream, but God is omnipotent. How he wishes he could change the current, but fear not, for God abides immutably the same. How he wishes he could get at you and me; but only once let us get safe landed in Zion, we may look over its walls across the broad rivers and streams, and remember that we are out of gunshot of the enemy so far as our spiritual existence is concerned. He cannot destroy us; worry us he may; for we are such timid souls, but kill he cannot, for God, even our mighty God keeps us safe beyond all possibility of destruction. - 365 Days with Spurgeon (Volume 2)

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### **Isaiah 33:21 - Broad Rivers Without Galley**

"But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallantship pass thereby."—Isaiah 33:21

THE Lord will be to us the greatest good without any of the drawbacks which seem necessarily to attend the best earthly things. If a city is favored with broad rivers, it is liable to be attacked by galleys with oars and other ships of war. But when the Lord represents the abundance of His bounty under this figure, He takes care expressly to shut out the fear which the metaphor might suggest. Blessed be His perfect love!

Lord, if thou send me wealth like broad rivers, do not let the galley with oars come up in the shape of worldliness or pride. If thou grant me abundant health and happy spirits, do not let "the gallant ship" of carnal ease come sailing up the flowing flood. If I have success in holy service, broad as the German Rhine, yet let me never find the galley of self-conceit and self-confidence floating on the waves of my usefulness. Should I be so supremely happy as to enjoy the light of thy countenance year after year, yet let me never despise thy feeble saints nor allow the vain notion of my own perfection to sail up the broad rivers of my full assurance. Lord, give me that blessing which maketh rich, and neither addeth sorrow, nor aideth sin. Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook

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**Isaiah 33:21 - The glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams.”**

Broad rivers and streams produce fertility, and abundance in the land. Places near broad rivers are remarkable for the variety of their plants and their plentiful harvests. God is all this to his Church. Having God she has abundance. What can she ask for that he will not give her? What want can she mention which he will not supply? “In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things.” Want ye the bread of life? It drops like manna from the sky. Want ye refreshing streams? The rock follows you, and that Rock is Christ. If you suffer any want it is your own fault; if you are straitened you are not straitened in him, but in your own bowels. Broad rivers and streams also point to commerce. Our glorious Lord is to us a place of heavenly merchandise. Through our Redeemer we have commerce with the past; the wealth of Calvary, the treasures of the covenant, the riches of the ancient days of election, the stores of eternity, all come to us down the broad stream of our gracious Lord. We have commerce, too, with the future. What galleys, laden to the water’s edge, come to us from the millennium! What visions we have of the days of heaven upon earth! Through our glorious Lord we have commerce with angels; communion with the bright spirits washed in blood, who sing before the throne; nay, better still, we have fellowship with the Infinite One. Broad rivers and streams are specially intended to set forth the idea of security. Rivers were of old a defence. Oh! beloved, what a defence is God to his Church! The devil cannot cross this broad river of God. How he wishes he could turn the current, but fear not, for God abideth immutably the same. Satan may worry, but he cannot destroy us; no galley with oars shall invade our river, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. - Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

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**Isaiah 33:22**

69. Q. What is faith in Jesus Christ?

A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace (Heb. 10:39), whereby we receive (Jn. 1:12), and rest upon him alone for salvation (Phil. 3:9), as he is set forth in the gospel (Isa. 33:22). - Spurgeon -A Catechism, With Proofs

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**Isaiah 33:22 A Throne of Moral Government**

When the eagle-eyed prophet of Patmos, being in the Spirit, looked aloft into the heavens, he saw a throne. From this, I gather that there is a throne of moral government over the sons of men, and that He who sits upon it presides over all the inhabitants of this world. The dominion of this throne reaches from Adam in Paradise down to the last man on earth, whoever he may be. We are not without our Judge, Lawgiver, and King (Isaiah 33:22). This world is not left so that men may do in it as they will, without a governor, without an avenger, without anyone to give reward or to inflict punishment.

In his blindness, the sinner looks, but he sees no throne. Therefore, he cries, “I will live as I desire, for there is none to call me to account.” However, John, with illumined eyes, distinctly saw a throne and a personal Ruler, who sat there to call His subjects to account. When our faith looks through the glass of revelation, it sees a throne, too. - Spurgeon - When Christ Returns

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Isaiah 33:23. Increased weakness must not make us cease. Jacob was lame yet he prevailed. “The lame take the prey”: Isaiah 33:23. - Spurgeon

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**Isaiah 33:24 Healing and pardon**



'And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.' Isaiah 33:24

When we once begin to feel what sin is, to discern its true nature, and to understand the just punishment which must follow upon it, we cannot rest under its condemnation. Though God should give us dainties from day to day, clothe us in scarlet and fine linen and set us among the princes of the earth, we should be restless and wretched as long as sin preyed upon our heart. Sin casts darkness upon the sun, eclipsing its meridian light. Sin is the blast which withers all the flowers of life. Sin is the gall of bitterness; a drop of it would turn an ocean of pleasure into wormwood. Sin would again blight Paradise, could it be restored; it would turn heaven into hell could it enter there. Sin is a burden which an awakened conscience cannot bear; it crushes the spirit into the dust and threatens further to bear it down, even to the lowest hell. But when sin is pardoned, then our hymn which we have just now been singing leaps joyfully to our lips: 'Now, oh joy! my sins are pardoned'. Is this not a necessary ingredient in that overflowing cup which the Lord puts to the lips of his redeemed ones? 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ', but without that justification there can be no peace and no enjoyment of life. Believers are spoken of as a blessed people who joy in God: they are bidden to rejoice evermore: the apostle says, 'Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.' Such rejoicing would be impossible if sin were not pardoned and therefore we conclude that sin may be pardoned, that it may be pardoned now and that we may know it. If forgiveness is essential to a state of mind which we are exhorted to exhibit, then forgiveness may be enjoyed at this present hour. - 365 Days with Spurgeon (Volume 6)

## ISAIAH 34

### **Isaiah 34:8 The day of the Lord's vengeance, the year of recompense. (R.V.).**

These chapters remind us that there is a God that judgeth in the earth. The tendency of the present day is to reduce all things to the operation of natural law, and to crowd God out of his own world; as though He had no longer as much power as a judge or magistrate to inflict punishment! Here He comes out of the silence of eternity to avenge the wrongs of his people perpetrated upon them by Edom. The Jews could never forget that when they were in the extremity of their conflict with Babylon, Edom rejoiced and said, "Rase it, rase it to the foundation thereof." Now, at length, God would vindicate his people, and punish the proud land whose sins cried to Heaven.

Let us remember that God works not only through natural law, but by sudden manifest interpositions of his providence; and when He arises on behalf of the meek, the result is not only terrible but lasting. It seems as though God's judgment on Edom and other peoples, which has left their lands as desolate scars on the face of the earth, are instances of the permanence of God's decrees, and of their irreversibility: "The smoke thereof shall go up for ever; from generation to generation it shall be waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever." It was often told by the Waldenses, how the prince that broke the covenant with them and drove them across the Swiss mountains, died of a broken heart at the death of his first-born.

God does not appear always to avenge the wrongs of his people in the present life. The wicked pass away amid their ill-gotten prosperity, but in the next world their evil deeds come back to roost in their own hearts. - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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### **Isaiah 34:16. Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read.**

Do not think you are getting no good from the Bible, merely because you do not see that good day by day. The greatest effects are by no means those which make the most noise and are most easily observed. The greatest effects are often silent, quiet, and hard to detect at the time they are being produced. Think of the influence of the moon upon the earth, and of the air upon the human lungs. Remember how silently the dew falls, and how imperceptibly the grass grows. There may be far more doing than you think in your soul by your Bible-reading, - J C Ryle

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For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, the year of recompense in the controversy of Zion.—Isa. 34.8

In these last two chapters of the first part of this book of Isaiah, the prophet again takes the widest outlook. As, at the close of the section containing the Burdens of the nations, he uttered prophecies concerning the whole world (see Isaiah 24-27), so does he here. Here again his outlook is first upon desolation, and then upon restoration. The indignation of Jehovah is seen proceeding against all nations because of their iniquities. Edom is made the centre and symbol of the antagonism to Zion. Edom is of Esau, as Zion is of Israel. All that the ideal nation stood for, had been opposed persistently by Edom. Now, upon that whole attitude the vengeance of God is seen to fall. In connection with this, let the prophecy of Obadiah be read. There, the antagonism is very clearly brought out. The issue of that spirit of animalism is that of complete annihilation. The vengeance of Jehovah is irrevocable and irresistible. It is at least a most suggestive fact that when our Lord, the one perfect flower and fruit of Israel's race, was here exercising His earthly ministry, an Idumean, that is an Edomite, in the person of Herod, was reigning over the people; and it is more than suggestive in that relation, that he is the one human being to whom Christ had nothing to say. Once He sent him a message full

of contempt. When at last He was in his presence, He spoke no word to him. God makes no terms with that for which Edom stood. Its portion is destruction. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 35

- See in depth commentary on Isaiah 35

### **Isaiah 35:8 The way of holiness.**

This chapter is full of blessed prevision of a state of perfect blessedness, when the curse that has so long brooded over the world shall be removed. Into that sweet and blessed country there is a way from the present: it is the way of holiness.

It is a way. Our holiness is progressive. Though we may perfectly obey up to the limit of our knowledge, that knowledge is ever on the increase, beckoning our advance. Before us lies the path marked out by the footsteps of Jesus, climbing from strength to strength, and we are called to walk in it.

It is a highway. That is, it is for every one that will. It is kept in repair under the King's own orders. There are no toll-gates on its straight line of route. It is like those Roman roads which traversed countries from end to end, and remain today imperishable monuments of the skill of their constructors.

It is closed against the unclean. The leper of old was forbidden to obstruct the thoroughfare. The unclean soul is equally forbidden to taint that holy way. God's first requirement of us is separation.

This way is always trodden by Jesus. "He shall be with them" (R. V., marg.). The holy soul has a Divine Companion. For the most part those who tread this way do so as part of a great host; but when the path seems lonely, He goes beside who walked to Emmaus.

It is plainly defined. Wayfaring men, though fools, need make no mistake. Be true to the Bible, to the holy instincts of your soul, and, above all, to the blessed Comforter who guides all. The way may sometimes be paved with jagged flints; but keep in it, it is safe walking, and it leads home. - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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**C H SPURGEON Spurgeon's Expositions often have a devotional flavor so be sure to check out what he writes on...**

[Isaiah 35](#)

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### **Isaiah 35:8 The King's Highway**

"The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."—Isaiah 35:8

THE way of holiness is so straight and plain that the simplest minds cannot go astray if they constantly follow it. The worldly wise have many twists and turns, and yet they make terrible blunders and generally miss their end. Worldly policy is a poor, short-sighted thing; and when men choose it as their road, it leads them over dark mountains. Gracious minds know no better than to do as the Lord bids them; but this keeps them in the king's highway, and under royal protection.

Let the reader never for a moment attempt to help himself out of a difficulty by a falsehood or by a questionable act; but let him keep in the middle of the high road of truth and integrity, and he will be following the best possible course. In our lives we must never practice circular sailing, nor dream of shuffling. Be just and fear not. Follow Jesus, and heed no evil consequences. If the worst of ills could be avoided by wrong-doing, we should, in the very attempt, have fallen into an evil worse than any other ill could be. God's way must be the best way. Follow it though men think you a fool, and you will be truly wise.

Lord, lead thy servants in a plain path because of their enemies. - Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook

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### **Isaiah 35:3 Weak hands and feeble knees**

"Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees." Isaiah 35:3

In all flocks there must be lambs, and weak and wounded sheep, and among the flock of men, it seems that there must necessarily be some who should more than others prove the truth of Job's declaration, "man is born to trouble, even as the sparks fly upwards." It is the duty then of those of us who are more free than others from despondency of spirit, to be very tender to these weak ones. Far be it from the man of courageous disposition, of stern resolve, and of unbending purpose, to be hard towards those who are timid and despairing. If we have a lion-like spirit, let us not imitate the king of beasts in his cruelty to those timid fallow deer that fly before him, but let us place our strength at their service for their help and protection. Let us with downy fingers bind up the wounded heart; with oil and wine let us nourish their fainting spirits. In this battle of life, let the unwounded warriors bear their injured

comrades to the rear, bathe their wounds, and cover them from the storm of war. Be gentle with those that are despondent. Alas, it is not every man that has learned this lesson. There are some who deal with others with rough-handed thoughtlessness. "Ah," they say, "if such a one be so foolish as to be sensitive let him be." O speak not thus; to be sensitive, timid, and despondent, is ill enough in itself, without our being hard and harsh towards those who are so afflicted. Go forth, and "do to others as ye would that they should do to you" and as ye would that others should in your hours of despondency deal with you tenderly and comfortably, so deal tenderly and comfortably with them - 365 Days with Spurgeon (Vol 1)

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### **Isaiah 35:4. Night**

"Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not."—Isaiah 35:4.

OH how precious is the Word of God! for it contains a cordial for every sickness, a balm for every wound, and here at the close of the day let me console myself with it. How often does a fearful heart weaken and vex the people of God! how well it is that the Holy Spirit has given this word to cheer them in their distresses!

Sometimes GREAT TROUBLES cause the heir of heaven to be much cast down. But why is it so? Are not our fears groundless? Do not our troubles work our lasting good? Why need we fear the issue when it is in Jehovah's hands? Our fears grieve us more than our afflictions. Our greatest pains spring from our unbelief, not from our trials, for if we had more faith our trials could not make us afraid. Besides this, such fears weaken us, they cut the girdle of our loins and take away the staff of our support. We shall have need of all the strength we have; it is neither prudent nor right to allow the life-blood of that strength to flow away from the wounds of our fears. Do not our anxieties dishonour God, and cast a reflection upon his power, his wisdom, or his grace? Away with that which casts a slur upon the attributes of God, it is not fit that such a thing should be harboured by a Christian. Once more, Are not such fears very useless things? Who ever derived any advantage from them? Can fears fill an empty cupboard, or restore the health of a dying child? There is something reasonable in strong prayer and earnest activity, but of what value are our fears? When we can prove that they benefit us, we may be almost excused for indulging them, but till then, let us be strong and fear not.

GREAT DUTIES also have a tendency to alarm our poor timorous flesh and blood, but let us remember that the work is the Lord's, we do not go a warfare at our own charges. Our Master will never set us upon a work which is too hard for us. When we have his command we are sure to have his assistance. - Spurgeon - Sword and Trowel

BE STRONG, FEAR NOT

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### **Isaiah 35 -**

Isa 35:1. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them;

They shall be so glad that they shall inspire gladness where all was desolation, and brooding, melancholy batwing, and dragon's howl. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them."

Isa 35:1. And the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

God's people are a happy-making people. They are a blessing in themselves, and they shall be a blessing to others, till all shall say, "These are the seed that the Lord hath blessed." "The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."

Isa 35:2. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD and the excellency of our God.

A wonderful sight to see, for there is one of the most lovely sights in the world when the glory and excellency of God are to be seen in the works of his grace in his own people. It is such a sight that it makes men first rejoice in their hearts, and then rejoice with their tongues. They shall "rejoice with joy and singing," which is the double rejoicing of the heart and of the lip. Well, these must be a favored people who, wherever they go, can make others glad after this fashion. Brethren, they must be full or they could not overflow! They must be themselves alive, or else they could not quicken the desert places. They must themselves be in flower, blooming like the rose, or they could not make the wilderness so full of verdure. The Lord grant that we may be in that state that we may be able to go into the wilderness. There are some of God's people that cannot trust themselves to go where they are wanted, because they have not grace enough. They are so weak that they are like the weak man standing on the river's brink, who cannot leap in to pull out a drowning man for fear they should be pulled in themselves. But, oh! they are blest indeed who dare go into wildernesses and into the solitary places, and carry the transforming benediction of heaven with them till the wilderness changes its dress, and the brown of the sand gives place to the ruddiness of the rose, because God has come there with his people.

Isa 35:3. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

Are there such here tonight? No doubt there are — weak at work, and weak at praying. The two things go together — weak hands and feeble knees. May they both be strengthened.

Isa 35:4. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you.

It is very singular how salvation and vengeance are so often associated together in Scripture. It is the day of salvation," and the day of vengeance of our God to comfort all that mourn." Vengeance upon the false is the best consolation to the true. When God smites the sham, even to the heart, then does he bless that in which the truth is found. "He will come and save you."

Isa 35:5-6. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

See what the presence of Christ does. See what the presence of Christ's people will do when he comes in them and with them. They make the wilderness rejoice. But, besides that, the dwellers that are found in the wilderness — these lame and deaf people — get the blessing. Oh! may God make us to be a desert to others of this sort.

Isa 35:7. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

The greenest spots your eye ever rested upon are just there where the grass is so rooted in the morass that it is always green with a delicate tinge, and the reeds and rushes spring up abundantly. O God, make poor parched hearts to become like this! You barren ones, you desolate ones, he can give you the best verdure that is possible. Your hearts shall be as green and fresh as the spots where there is grass with reeds and rushes.

Isa 35:8. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

Oh! what a blessing that is to us poor fools! We should err anywhere. To err is human, and we seem to have come in for a double share of it. The more we look at our lives the more we see the folly of our hearts. What a mercy it is that when we walk in the way of faith, in the way of Christ, fools as we are, we shall not err!

Isa 35:9-10. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Like frightened things. They kept us company part of our road, but, when the Lord appeared they took to themselves wings and fled away. We could not tell where they were gone to. We were surprised to find that they had quite vanished. Oh! for the appearing of the Lord tonight to his mourning people who may be here.

### **Spurgeon Exposition**

See in depth commentary on Isaiah 35

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### **Isaiah 35:1–10**

The ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. - Isaiah 35:10

#### **TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL**

Just as the Jews yearned to worship in Jerusalem, so we, too, should joyfully anticipate worshiping God in the new Jerusalem. Listen to the apostle John:

"I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God... 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away'... The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp... Nothing impure will ever enter it ... but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11-[note](#)).

On our Christian journey, this is where we're headed, and this is where we long to be. Today's reading reflects the joy of the redeemed on that day. Israel's return from exile foreshadowed this joy but did not completely fulfill it.

Nature, personified in Isaiah's prophecy, will share in the rejoicing (cf. Ro 8:19-note, Ro 8:20, 21-note). Water will come to the desert, and the wilderness will blossom. Barren places will become fruitful, like the most beautiful and fertile places the author knew. These images reflect radical transformation--the old order of things will pass away.

Humanity will likewise be transfigured. The effects of sin will be undone. The blind will see, the deaf hear, the lame walk. Christ's miracles showed that the kingdom has indeed come, and in God's timing will grow from a tiny seed to a tree that fills the whole world (Ma. 11:2, 3, 4, 5, 6).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - Worship is such a rich theme that we'd like to recommend it for additional Bible study. Go beyond

today's devotion and dig deeper into the topic.

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## **Read Isaiah 35:1-10; Isaiah 34-35**

### **Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away. Isaiah 35:10**

The desert is turning green in Niger. Twenty years ago, farmers realized that things were getting out of hand. Land used for agriculture was becoming wasteland, its topsoil blown away by the wind. Drought was severe. The farmers decided not to plow saplings from their fields, but instead to plow around them, thus protecting them and allowing them to grow. This simple and inexpensive conservation measure has been a key in re-greening 7.4 million acres and reducing the poverty level of the farming villages in this African nation.

A garden blooming in the desert is one of Isaiah's metaphors for God's plan for Israel: Though a time of judgment is coming (the desert), redemption will follow (flowers blooming, water gushing) (35:1-7). The twin themes of judgment and joy, under the umbrella of divine sovereignty and throughout various future times, permeate today's reading in Isaiah. The judgment emphasis of chapter 34, filled as it is with bloody imagery typical of the literary devices of that day, gives way to the joy of the redeemed in chapter 35.

This transformation will bring glory to the name of the Lord. Though from a human perspective He will seem to have abandoned His people, He will return to them in triumph and splendor. The desert will blossom. The weak will become strong. Fear will turn to faith. The covenant relationship that was broken will be restored. Justice that had appeared thwarted will be done in full. And the power of God will be miraculously evident as the blind see and the lame walk.

In that day, the redeemed will walk a "Way of Holiness" (35:8). Those who travel on it must be holy, wise, and pure, but it is God who will make them so, not they themselves. These pilgrims will be "ransomed" people, rescued by God and living wholly for Him (35:10). The exiled will return, the mourners will sing, the grief-stricken will rejoice, and the temporary will give way before the eternal.

#### **APPLY THE WORD**

Today's suggested application is to do a creative or artistic project about the Highway of Holiness in Isaiah 35:8. Perhaps you'd like to write a poem or lyrics for a song about it. Or you could get out your camera, do some photography, and put together a collage of road pictures. Another option is to make this a family project by asking your children or grandchildren to color or paint pictures of this special highway. What do they think such a road might look like?

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## **Isaiah 35**

Your God will come ... he will come to save you. - Isaiah 35:4b

#### **TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL**

On Saturday, March 9, 2002 cousins Melissa Cook and Jill Semplinski-Nelson were visiting Chicago with their mothers to celebrate Melissa's 30th birthday. But their trip turned tragic when high winds blew a piece of scaffolding off of the 43rd floor of the John Hancock Building while the party was waiting in traffic below. The heavy equipment flattened the front of their car. The mothers, sitting in the back seat, watched in horror as their daughters were killed. The falling debris killed one more motorist, injured eight bystanders, and left witnesses in shocked disbelief. The accident provides a horrific example for how random violence and destruction can seem in this world. Such events could easily lead us to despair if it weren't for God's promise of justice in the final kingdom.

Today's Scripture reading gives us a vivid picture of what we have to look forward to as we walk in a right relationship with God. Isaiah 35 is the counterpart to the previous chapter's description of God's vengeance on the wicked. In chapter 34, Isaiah proclaims God's displeasure not only with Edom (Isa 34:5), but with all of the nations (Isa 34:2). In a display of power that is absolute and complete, God vows to destroy the nations and, ultimately, all those who oppose Him (Isa. 63:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6).

In chapter 35, Isaiah goes on to describe the other side of this equation, the blessing of the righteous. While in chapter 34 God promises to destroy the wicked, in chapter 35 He promises to transform the world into a place where the effects of sin are reversed and creation functions in proper relation to Him once again.

**TODAY ALONG THE WAY** Take a walk around your neighborhood today. As you survey God's creation, imagine that you are on the "highway" spoken of in today's Scripture reading. Note the beauty of God's mark on the terrain and in your neighbors. Pray that God would instill in you a deep-seated sense of joy for His presence in your life and express your anticipation for the world to come, when creation will be restored. Make this walk a weekly habit of praise and prayer as a reminder of God's promise

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They shall see the glory of the Lord, the excellency of our God.—Isa. 35.2

In this brief but beautiful chapter we have the concluding note of the first part of this great book of Isaiah. It is a perfect song of restoration. It begins with a recognition of the wilderness, the dry land, and the desert (verse r). It ends with Zion, the city of God, the realization of the Divine order (verse to). This is the note found in all these Hebrew prophets. No men saw the corruption of life more clearly, or denounced sin more vehemently. At times their messages were dirges, almost, but never quite reaching the level of despair. Never quite, for they saw Jehovah, and that vision made despair impossible. Through all the clouds and darkness, the travail and terror, they saw the day of God coming; and His day was a day of restoration as to its ultimate, although a day of wrath and consuming fire in its processes. The words we have emphasized are the most revealing, in their portrayal of the final world order. The word "They," in the Hebrew "These," refers to the wilderness, the dry land, the desert. "They shall see the glory of Jehovah, the excellency of our God." That glory is the glory of Lebanon, the mountain of cedars; that excellency is the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, the places of fruit-fulness. This is the final victory of God in the earth. It is the victory, not of creation, but of ransom, redemption, regeneration, renewal. Not that Lebanon should flourish and Sharon and Carmel rejoice; but that the wilderness and the desert places rendered desolate by human pollution, should come to see the glory of Jehovah. When Isaiah heard the seraphim sing, he heard them declare that the whole earth is full of the glory of Jehovah. Here he declares that this glory shall be manifested in spite of desolations widespread and long-continued. - G Campbell Morgan

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### **Isaiah 35:8 The holy road**

'And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.' Isaiah 35:8

We might gather from our text that this way was cast up at great expense, for road-making over a long and rugged country is a costly business. It might be read, 'a causeway shall be there'; it is a way thrown up and raised by art. Engineering has done much to tunnel mountains and bridge abysses, but the greatest triumph of engineering is that which made a way from sin to holiness, from death to life, from condemnation to perfection. Who could make a road over the mountains of our iniquities but Almighty God? None but the Lord of love would have wished it; none but the God of wisdom could have devised it; none but the God of power could have carried it out. It cost the great God the Jewel of heaven: he emptied out the treasury of his own heart, for he 'spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all'. In the life and death of the Well-beloved infinite wisdom laid a firm foundation for the road by which sinners in all ages may journey home to God. The highway of our God is such a masterpiece that even those who travel it every day often stand and wonder how such a way could have been planned and constructed. That prophecy is fulfilled to the letter: 'I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls'. This road has lasted now thousands of years; it is still in good travelling condition and will never be closed till all the chosen wayfarers shall have reached the many mansions of the Father's house. The everlasting causeway remains unbroken and unaltered, and fresh caravans of pilgrims continually traverse it. - 365 Days with Spurgeon (Vol 6)

- See in depth commentary on Isaiah 35

## **ISAIAH 36**

### **Isaiah 36:21 They held their peace, and answered him not a word.**

It was very bitter for Hezekiah and Isaiah that these words of vituperation and abuse were spoken in the open air, the voice of the speaker travelling far enough to be heard by the whole population in Jerusalem. Rabshakeh loudly reminded them that Egypt was a broken reed; then suggested that Hezekiah's recent raid against the idolatry which had grown up in his country must have alienated the God of Israel; then that God Himself had sent him to destroy the land; and lastly, he quoted the long list of conquests that had fallen to the share of his master. What could Hezekiah do against the conqueror of Sepharvaim and other proud cities, which were level with the ground? To all of which the king ordered they should give no reply.

Silence is our best reply to the allegations and taunts of our foes. Be still, O persecuted soul! Hand over thy cause to God. It is useless to argue, even in many cases to give explanations. Be still, and commit thy cause to God. He has heard every word, and will answer. Thus Jesus also held his peace, when falsely accused:—

"He stood alone,  
Silent amidst their clamour — He whose voice  
Of power but late suffic'd to ope the grave!  
'Others He saved — Himself He cannot save!  
O mystic silence! how divine thy choice."

But before going into this conflict be sure that, like Hezekiah, thou hast put from thee all that is false and evil. The iconoclasm of the good king which Rabshakeh so curiously misinterpreted was, after all, his main security. It is necessary that there should be no controversy between God and the soul which He is to defend. - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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**“Now on whom dost thou trust.”—Isaiah 36:5**

Reader, this is an important question. Listen to the Christian’s answer, and see if it is yours. “On whom dost thou trust?” “I trust,” says the Christian, “in a triune God. I trust the Father, believing that he has chosen me from before the foundations of the world; I trust him to provide for me in providence, to teach me, to guide me, to correct me if need be, and to bring me home to his own house where the many mansions are. I trust the Son. Very God of very God is he—the man Christ Jesus. I trust in him to take away all my sins by his own sacrifice, and to adorn me with his perfect righteousness. I trust him to be my Intercessor, to present my prayers and desires before his Father’s throne, and I trust him to be my Advocate at the last great day, to plead my cause, and to justify me. I trust him for what he is, for what he has done, and for what he has promised yet to do. And I trust the Holy Spirit—he has begun to save me from my inbred sins; I trust him to drive them all out; I trust him to curb my temper, to subdue my will, to enlighten my understanding, to check my passions, to comfort my despondency, to help my weakness, to illuminate my darkness; I trust him to dwell in me as my life, to reign in me as my King, to sanctify me wholly, spirit, soul, and body, and then to take me up to dwell with the saints in light for ever.”

Oh, blessed trust! To trust him whose power will never be exhausted, whose love will never wane, whose kindness will never change, whose faithfulness will never fail, whose wisdom will never be nonplussed, and whose perfect goodness can never know a diminution! Happy art thou, reader, if this trust is thine! So trusting, thou shalt enjoy sweet peace now, and glory hereafter, and the foundation of thy trust shall never be removed. - Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

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In whom art thou trusting?

‘Now on whom dost thou trust?’ Isaiah 36:5

I rest with my whole soul upon the finished work of Christ, and I have not found anything yet that leads me to suspect I am resting where I shall meet with a failure. No, the older one grows, the more one gets convinced that he who leans by faith on Christ, rests where he never needs to be afraid. He may go and return in peace and confidence, for the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed, but God shall not change, and his purpose shall not cease to stand. Yes, God is worthy of our confidence. And I think we can say, by way of commending our God to others, that we feel we can rest upon him for the future. We have been in strange places, and in very peculiar conditions in the past, but we were never thrown where we could not find in God all we needed; and we are therefore encouraged to believe that when death’s dark night shall come, with all its gathering of terror, we shall fear no evil, for the same God will be with us to be our succour and our stay. The Isle of Man has for its coat of arms three legs, and turn them which way you will, you know they always stand; and such is the believer—throw him which way you will, he finds something to stand on; throw him into death, or into life, into the lion’s den, or into the whale’s belly, cast him into fire, or into water, the Christian still trusts in his God, and finds him a very present help in time of trouble. ‘On whom dost thou trust?’ We can answer boldly, ‘We trust in him whose power will never be exhausted, whose love will never cease, whose kindness will never change, whose faithfulness will never be sullied, whose wisdom will never be nonplussed, and whose perfect goodness never can know a diminution.’ - 365 Days with Spurgeon (Vol 2)

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And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? Isa 36.4

This is the first of four chapters of history, inserted between the first and second parts of this book. They record incidents during the reign of King Hezekiah in which Isaiah exercised his influence. The first (in this chapter and the next), is that of the Assyrian threat to the city of God. This came as Isaiah had foretold, and it was defeated by God, as he had predicted. In this chapter we have the account of the coming of Sennacherib, and the speech of the Rabshakeh. That speech was intended to reduce the morale of the nation. With singular astuteness this man asked them to consider their confidence. He seems to have been familiar with the policies of Judah, evidently knowing that there were two parties, the one seeking aid from Egypt, the other—the king most probably being among them—looking only to Jehovah (see verses 6 and 7). With scorn and remarkable accuracy, he described Egypt as a “bruised reed.” As to Jehovah, he first suggested that the action of Hezekiah in taking away high places had been a refusal of Jehovah. This was either deliberate misrepresentation, or ignorance, for what Hezekiah had done was to remove the high places of false gods. Later he defied Jehovah, as he declared that no gods had been strong enough to resist the king of Assyria. All this is very illuminating as revealing the weakness of earthly power. Diplomats, who represent brute force, may gauge Egypt accurately, for her power is as their own; but when they try to explain God, they are ever dealing with that of which they are ignorant. In this



## ISAIAH 37

### Isaiah 37:14-20; Isaiah 36-37

#### **Deliver us from his hand, so that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O Lord, are God. Isaiah 37:20**

Psychological warfare tries to win battles without actually fighting. For example, one form of psychological warfare is to drop leaflets behind enemy lines promising amnesty to soldiers who surrender. Or perhaps the leaflets will say that the soldiers shouldn't fight because their leaders are untrustworthy and not worth giving their lives for. Another tactic is to spread rumors or publicize facts about how much more powerful one army is compared to the other, so that the weaker side will be too discouraged to put up a fight.

The Assyrian general tried to wage psychological warfare against Israel in today's narrative. Thanks to the Lord, it backfired badly. Isaiah 36–39 marks the midpoint of the book; these chapters, which we'll consider today and tomorrow, form an historical bridge between its two halves (cf. 2 Kings 18:13–20:19).

In 701 B.C., Assyria, which by then had conquered the northern kingdom of Israel, thought it could swallow the southern kingdom of Judah as well. Sennacherib's message was a nice piece of psychological warfare. He gave a discouraging military assessment of Judah's chances of resisting his superior force, and he said it in Hebrew within hearing of defenders on the city walls. His fatal mistake, however, was including this arrogant boast: "Who of all the gods of these countries has been able to save his land from me? How then can the Lord deliver Jerusalem from my hand?" (36:20).

King Hezekiah's reaction was godly. He didn't panic or send representatives seeking new alliances. Instead, he sought the Lord in repentant sorrow, and sought Isaiah for a word from the Lord. His prayer (37:14–20) summarized the main issues: Who is the real God? Not idols! What is Sennacherib's attitude? Mockery of the real God. What to do? Deliver us and show the world the real God. For the glory of His name, the Lord granted Hezekiah's prayer and divinely won the battle.

#### APPLY THE WORD

Almost any study Bible will tell you that sackcloth and ashes signified grief in Bible times (37:1–2). But why? And how did people decide when and where to show sorrow in this way? When and where did this custom originate? If you wish, research these questions in order to deepen your background knowledge of Scripture. You might also research or find out about modern parallels. That is, what traditions or customs do we have in various cultures today for showing extreme sorrow?

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#### **Isaiah 37:14 Hezekiah went unto the house of the Lord, and spread the letter before the Lord.**

Probably he literally handed in the letter to God, opening it and laying it down in the Holy Place, as though the responsibility of dealing with its contents no longer devolved upon himself.

The post and telegraph are great factors in modern life. They are perpetually bringing to us documents of one kind and another, which involve anxious thought. Sometimes a heavy account for expenditure which has been necessarily and righteously incurred; or a story of wrong-doing on the part of some near relative; or some piteous appeal for help. Indeed, not unseldom, letters like this that Rabshakeh addressed to Hezekiah may fall into our lap. We read with beating hearts, and know not what to say, and finally go into the presence of God and spread it out. Answer it for us, great God, we entreat Thee!

The Divine reply came first in the blessed assurance sent through Isaiah; and next when the angel of the Lord "spread his wings on the blast, and breathed on the face of the foe as he passed." Let us more habitually hand over our anxieties and cares to God. God calls us to enter into his rest, i.e., to place Himself and his care between us and all that would hurt or annoy. "Doth God take care for oxen." and will He not care for his children? Is a falling sparrow more to Him than his child? Hath He brought us so far on our journey to put us to shame? Only let us be sure that we have given no just cause for the unkind tone of the letters, or brought ourselves into a false position with respect to those who hate God. Daily exercise yourself to have a conscience void of offence: then, with God on your side, you can face a world in arms. F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? And against Whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? Even against the Holy One of Israel.—Isa. 37:23

When the tauntings of the Rabshakeh were completed, and replied to in silence (Isaiah 36.21), Hezekiah sent to Isaiah. The treaty with Egypt was of no avail. This was patent. Hezekiah, who had been largely in the hands of the politicians, while all the time most probably in sympathy with Isaiah, now, as king, assumed the garb of penitence for the false way. The answer of Isaiah was instant



and assuring. Jehovah would intervene, and the King of Assyria would return to his own land and perish there by the sword. The Rabshakeh, returning to his master, found him at war against Libnah; he also heard that Ethiopia was in arms against Assyria. Then he made another attempt to intimidate Hezekiah by a letter, openly defying Jehovah. This the king spread before Jehovah. Isaiah declared the Divine answer to that prayer in the message he delivered. These words are those in which the prophet laid bare the deepest fact in the sin of Assyria. It is good here to turn back to an earlier word of the prophet concerning Assyria (Isaiah 5-33). In that he had described Assyria as the rod and staff in the hand of God for the chastisement of His people; and had fore-told Assyria's pride as boasting itself against the hand that held it. Here, in history, this foretelling was fulfilled; and the prophet denounced Assyria for this sin; and, in language full of force, foretold the doom thereof. The Divine intervention on behalf of Jerusalem came mysteriously, but with complete victory, as the angel of Jehovah smote the hosts and left them dead on the plain. Thus the deeds of God demonstrate the folly of policies which neglect Him, and justify faith in Himself alone. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 38

### Isaiah 38:15-20

Fathers tell their children about [God's] faithfulness. - Isaiah 38:19

#### TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

If they were asked, many people would say the reason for Daylight Saving Time is so they can squeeze in an extra hour on the lake or prolong the backyard summer barbecue and croquet game. But while outdoor recreation is one reason Congress passed a uniform daylight saving time act in 1966, the measure's original purpose was much more urgent. The practice was begun on March 31, 1918 as a war measure to conserve fuel and light.

Because human nature tends to be forgetful, we still carry on a lot of traditions that have long since lost their original significance. This can happen spiritually too, which is one reason the Bible constantly urges parents, fathers especially, to tell their children about the wonderful acts of God.

Consider the poem written by King Hezekiah of Judah after his illness and miraculous recovery at God's hands.

When you know the context (Isa 38:1, 2, 3, 4, 5,6, 7, 8, 9), you have no trouble understanding the intensity of Hezekiah's praise. He had just been healed and given fifteen more years of life. God had been abundantly faithful to the king. He had a story to tell!

Notice that the king praised God not just for healing, but for the illness and "anguish" (v. 15) that preceded Isaiah's announcement of healing. This lends a note of honesty and authenticity to Hezekiah's praise that makes his testimony more compelling.

All of us have a story to tell of God's faithfulness. With this comes the added responsibility of teaching the next generation that God will be faithful to them too if they will trust Him. The challenge is to communicate this in such a way that we help motivate these next generations to follow God with passion and commitment.

As we celebrate God's faithfulness, let's ensure that those around us know the full story of God's faithfulness to us, remembering to include His love in the hard times.

The modern term for this spiritual openness is transparency. But it's not enough just to be open and let everything spill out. Neither is it enough just to be able to be seen through. There must be some substance for other people to see. This Thanksgiving, help pass on the truth of God's faithfulness to the next generation by being open about all that He has done for you.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY The Thanksgiving season is tailor-made for our testimony of God's faithfulness. As you plan your Thanksgiving Day meal and activities, why not allow time for yourself and others to share a brief testimony of God's faithfulness this year? You may want to ask several people in advance to help you. These stories can have a powerful impact on young hearts, and on those around your table who may not know Christ.

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**Read Isaiah 38:1-8; Isaiah 38-39**

**Remember, O Lord, how I have walked before you faithfully. Isaiah 38:3**

Studies have concluded that a daily dose of honey directly raises levels of antioxidants in the blood, which helps fight disease and strengthen the body's immune system. The chemicals that have this effect, called polyphenols, are also found in fruits, vegetables, tea, and olive oil. Americans consume about 150 pounds of sugar or artificial sweetener per person per year, so switching some of that to honey could make a healthy difference!

But no amount of honey would have helped King Hezekiah. Chronologically, today's narrative comes before the episode with Sennacherib studied yesterday. It's placed here because it's a good thematic introduction to the second part of Isaiah, and it deals with the coming Babylonian conquest of Judah. Chapters 38 and 39 form a contrast—Hezekiah asking for God's grace out of "wholehearted devotion" to Him versus Hezekiah showing off his treasures to the Babylonian envoys.

In chapter 38, Hezekiah received news that he would die soon, but he was worried about having no son to take the throne after him. So in a remarkable sequence of prophecy-prayer-grace, God granted the king fifteen additional years of life. This answered petition was confirmed by the miraculous sign of a shadow going in reverse. The king's subsequent psalm of praise acknowledged God's loving purpose and rejoiced in His forgiveness and faithfulness.

In chapter 39, Babylon had sent envoys seeking new allies, but Hezekiah would have had to be rather naive not to see the possibility that they were gathering information. When he showed off his treasures, the message to the Babylonians was, "Little kingdom, rich prizes!" In this context, Isaiah's prophecy of conquest addressed Hezekiah's pride. The king's puzzling response (39:8) indicates at worst insensitivity or at best a hope that God might later change His mind.

This reminds us that no one is perfect. We must remember to trust in the Lord and never rely on our own understanding (Prov. 3:5–6).

#### APPLY THE WORD

In today's narrative, it appears that God had made up His mind to do one thing, but in response to Hezekiah's prayer He changed His mind and did something else. How does this relate to a text such as Psalm 33:11? Christians have long wrestled with this issue, and delving deeper can help us know and then trust and love God more deeply. It might be helpful to consult commentaries and theology books, to discuss it with a pastor or elder, and certainly to pray for wisdom.

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#### **Isaiah 38:17 In love to my soul.**

The R.V. margin is very beautiful. "Thou hast loved my soul from the pit." As though from the pit's mouth and onward there had been one long succession of loving thoughts and words. Or it may be that the love of God has loved us out of the pit of corruption. Let that pit of corruption stand for the evil of our own hearts, the abysmal depths of our selfishness, the lustings and fightings of our flesh. What could have saved us from all these, but the love of God?

The Patience of God's love.— God's patience has been greatly magnified in us, that He has borne with us so tenderly. If God had been less than infinite, He must long ago have renounced us in despair. Oh, the riches of his long-suffering! He has lingered near the pit of our corruption, drawing us from it with untiring solicitude, even when we have repeatedly cast ourselves back into it with ungrateful persistence.

The Sacrifices of God's love.— How much He has borne and suffered! The cross, with its shame and spitting, seems to be but a revelation, in terms that we can understand, of the pain that lies always on his heart, and of the inestimable cost our sin involves. It is this Divine sorrow which purifies us, as we devoutly consider it.

The Purity of God's love.— What a contrast between some fetid pool and the over-arching blue of heaven! Such is God's love as contrasted with our hate; his sweetness with our chidings, his holiness with our corruption. But his love conquers our sin, and draws us out of the pit. Where sin abounds, his grace much more abounds, and makes us loving and lovely.

"Thou art the victor, Love!" - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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#### **Isaiah 38:17 "Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back."**

where is God's back? Is there any place behind his back? He is everywhere present, and everywhere seen. It must be nowhere at all. Our sins are thrown into the nowhere. - Spurgeon

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#### **Thou hast in love to my soul de-livered it from the pit of corruption.—Isa 38.17**

These words occur in the song of a man who, in mortal sickness, had been to the gates of death, but who had been restored to life by the mercy of God. The first half of it (Isa 38:10-14) is a record of his experiences when, in his sickness, death seemed inevitable. It is full of sadness and darkness. To him there came no ray of light, illuminating that darkness. References to that experience in the after part of the song compel the conclusion that this sickness was of the nature of chastisement. It was for his peace, he admitted, that he had had great bitterness. That will explain his outlook upon death, and the absence of any hope in that outlook. The second half of the song (verses 15-20) contains his expressions of gladness in his deliverance from death by the mercy and power of God. This song is full of the sense of the deeper spiritual values of the suffering and deliverance. "By these things men live," he said, as he looked back; and significantly added, "wholly therein is the life of my spirit." In the words we have emphasized we have the

deepest note of the song, for in it there is a recognition of the whole purpose and method of God in the discipline, and in the deliverance. As our translators have rendered the words, they are full of beauty; but a more literal translation of the Hebrew is yet more arresting. It runs: "And Thou has loved my soul out of the pit of corruption." How wonderfully that tells the story of the Divine activity. He loves our souls out of the pit of corruption, at cost to us of suffering, but at infinitely greater cost to Himself. The full and final interpretation of this old word is found in the marvel and mystery of the Cross; wherein He did Himself fathom the depths of the pit of corruption; and whereby, in love, He lifts us out there from. - G Campbell Morgan

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### **Isaiah 38:17 A sense of pardoned sin**

"Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back." Isaiah 38:17

We are saved by faith, and not by feeling. "We walk by faith and not by sight." Yet there is as much connection between faith and hallowed feeling, as there is between the root and the flower. Faith is permanent, just as the root is ever in the ground; feeling is casual, and has its seasons. Just as the bulb does not always shoot up the green stem; far less is it always crowned with the many, many-coloured flower. Faith is the tree, the essential tree; our feelings are like the appearance of that tree during the different seasons of the year. Sometimes our soul is full of bloom and blossom, and the bees hum pleasantly, and gather honey within our hearts. It is then that our feelings bear witness to the life of our faith, just as the buds of spring bear witness to the life of the tree. Presently, our feelings gather still greater vigour, and we come to the summer of our delights. Again, perhaps, we begin to wither into the dry and yellow leaf of autumn; nay, sometimes the winter of our despondency and despair will strip away every leaf from the tree, and our poor faith stands like a blasted stem without a sign of greenness. And yet, my brethren, so long as the tree of faith is there we are saved. Whether faith blossom or not, whether it bring forth joyous fruit in our experience or not, so long as it be there in all its permanence we are saved. Yet we should have the gravest reason to distrust the life of our faith, if it did not sometimes blossom with joy, and often bring forth fruit unto holiness. - 365 Days with Spurgeon (Vol 1)

### **Isaiah 38:17 Miracles of love**

'Thou hast loved my soul out of the pit of corruption.' Isaiah 38:17

Lose your sense of Jesus' love and the power of your religion is gone. You have stolen the life if you have taken away the love. Believe it, know it, pray for it. Spirit of God, make them feel it, and anything shall be possible, whether of sin slain or duty wrought. I have often felt myself to be a mere expanse of foulness, like the mudflats by the seashore when the tide is out. As far as the eye can carry, you see a continent of mud with black rocks, rotting seaweed, pieces of wreck, creeping things innumerable and such foul matters as the eye might never wish to see again. What is to be done with this dismal region? Here lie the fisher boats embedded in the mud; what shall float them? It would be impossible to drag them down to the sea; must they lie there and decay? What is to be done with this mud and weed? Wait; and lo, at the appointed time the sea advances from its bed; ripple by ripple and wave by wave it rises, spreading out itself like a molten looking-glass, where just now all was foul; and lo, the boats are lifted; they walk the waters like things of life, while all that rotted in the noon-day sun is forgotten, and the waves follow each other with continuous flashes of silver sheen. O Lord, thou art that sea of love; thy mercies are thy waves of lovingkindness; let them come up and flood my soul; with infinite power of love, rise and cover all my nature. I hope the Lord will deal so with all of you. Never rest until you enjoy this love and, when you do enjoy it, keep it. If you find my Beloved, hold him and do not let him go. - 365 Days with Spurgeon (Vol 3)

## **ISAIAH 39**

### **Isaiah 39:4 There is nothing among my treasures that I have not showed them.**

In the book of the Chronicles there is a suggestion which shows the hidden evil that lurked beneath Hezekiah's attitude to these Babylonish ambassadors. "Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up, therefore there was wrath upon him." Beyond all other sin, pride is abhorrent to God as the parent of other sins, and it was this accursed principle that prompted Hezekiah to that outburst of ostentation. He did not care to remember that he had nothing which he had not first received, and that at the best he was only a trustee of God's gifts for others. You will remember that by this sin fell the angels. It was when Nebuchadnezzar surveyed Babylon from the roof of his palace that he was suddenly smitten with madness.

Be very careful to watch against ostentation and the pride from which it springs. The best antidote is the habit of looking from the gifts to the Giver, and to accustom yourself to the position of a steward of the benefits which have been done to you. Oh for more of the spirit of praise and thanksgiving, of adoring gratitude, of grateful love! Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be all the glory, O Lord God. All things come of Thee: wealth, and the power to get it; love, and the qualities that earn it; success, and the health of body and mind so needful to its acquisition. No doubt Hezekiah's sad lapse is intended as a warning to us all. The minuteness with which it is recorded may be intended to impress on us the danger of coquetting with the Babylon around us. It is impossible to do so without becoming ultimately carried into captivity to its corruption. - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord of hosts.—Isa 39.5

This brief chapter is full of dramatic force, and is principally interesting in its revelation of the relation existing between the King and the prophet. It is the record of a deflection on the part of Hezekiah, due largely to his vanity, and to his failure to realize the full meaning of what he was doing. It was the kind of mistake which good men make when they fail, in every detail of life, to seek for the light and guidance of the Will of God. The wrong having been done, Isaiah sought out the king, and the conversation between them is revealing. In it we see who, in those days, was really the representative of the Divine authority. The prophet instituted inquisition, and the king responded with-out questioning. In that, the better side of Hezekiah was manifested; and also, in his acceptance of the finding of the prophet as he said: "Good is the word of Jehovah which thou hast spoken." This abides the true function of the prophet. He asks no favour of kings, and accepts no patronage from them. He is the messenger of God, and it is his work to break in upon all the doings of men, whether kings, or lords, or commoners, with this self-same formula: "Hear the word of Jehovah of hosts!" He is not responsible to men, but to God. Moreover, he is not responsible for the response of men to his message; but only for its delivery. If men hear and obey, they walk in the way of wisdom. If, hearing, they rebel, even though they slay the prophet, his word will be fulfilled in their ultimate undoing. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 40

### **Isaiah 40:1 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people saith your God.**

There is a considerable interval between the preceding chapter and this. The Jews are now nearing the term of their long and bitter sufferings; their fiery trials have done their work.

Comfort, because sin is forgiven. — "Look to the wounds of Jesus, brother," said Staupitz to Luther. At the foot of the cross alone can sinners be comforted. We need not only the assurance of forgiveness, but some knowledge of the way in which it has been obtained, and the grounds on which it is based. Our hearts are never truly comforted till we learn that God is faithful and just when He forgives.

Comfort, because God is on his way to deliver.— The imagery is borrowed from the progress of an Oriental prince or conqueror. Great gangs of men are sent to level the ways before him. Be of good cheer, the prophet says; your God shall come with a strong hand. See the mountains become a way; the crooked is made straight and the rough places smooth. The glorious Lord comes to deliver the afflicted from his strong oppressor, and all flesh shall see it together.

Comfort, because the Strong Deliverer has a tender heart. — He comes as a mighty one, but He feeds his flock like a shepherd. Strong and sweet, mighty and merciful. The Everlasting Father, but the Prince of Peace. Those arms sustain the universe, but they gather lambs.

Comfort, because He faints not, neither is weary. — Others may tire after awhile. Physical strength droops and declines. Time seems long. The current may sweep lovers and friends out of our reach, but Thou remainest! "The Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary." - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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### **Isaiah 40:1 Comfort proclaimed**

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." Isaiah 40:1

To angels, first of all, I believe this command is addressed: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people." You often talk about the insinuations of the devil; I frequently hear you bemoaning yourselves because you have been attacked by Apollyon, and have had a hard struggle with Beelzebub; you have found it hard to resist his desperate thrusts which he made against you; and you are always talking about him. Allow me to remind you that there is another side of that question, for if evil spirits assault us, doubtless good spirits guard us; and if Satan can cast us down, doubtless it is true God gives his angels charge over us, to keep us in all our ways, and they shall bear us up in their hands lest at any time we dash our feet against a stone. It is my firm belief that angels are often employed by God to throw into the hearts of his people comforting thoughts. There are many sweet thoughts which we have by the way, when we sit down, and when we rise up, which we scarcely dare attribute immediately to the Holy Spirit, but which are still beautiful and calm, lovely, and fair, and consoling; and we attribute them to the ministry of angels. Angels came and ministered unto Jesus, and I doubt not that they minister unto us. Few of us have enough belief in the existence of spirits. I like that saying of Milton's, "Millions of spiritual creatures walk this earth, both when we sleep and when we wake." And if our minds were opened, if our ears were attentive, we might hold fellowship with spirits that flit through the air every moment. Around the death-bed of saints, angels hover; by the side of every struggling warrior for Christ the angels stand. - 365 Days with Spurgeon (Vol 1)

### **Isaiah 40:5 "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."**

We anticipate the happy day when the whole world shall be converted to Christ; when the gods of the heathen shall be cast to the moles and the bats; when Romanism shall be exploded, and the crescent of Mohammed shall wane, never again to cast its baleful rays upon the nations; when kings shall bow down before the Prince of Peace, and all nations shall call their Redeemer blessed.

Some despair of this. They look upon the world as a vessel breaking up and going to pieces, never to float again. We know that the world and all that is therein is one day to be burnt up, and afterwards we look for new heavens and for a new earth; but we cannot read our Bibles without the conviction that—

“Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
Does his successive journeys run.”

We are not discouraged by the length of his delays; we are not disheartened by the long period which he allots to the church in which to struggle with little success and much defeat. We believe that God will never suffer this world, which has once seen Christ's blood shed upon it, to be always the devil's stronghold. Christ came hither to deliver this world from the detested sway of the powers of darkness. What a shout shall that be when men and angels shall unite to cry “Hallelujah, hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!” What a satisfaction will it be in that day to have had a share in the fight, to have helped to break the arrows of the bow, and to have aided in winning the victory for our Lord! Happy are they who trust themselves with this conquering Lord, and who fight side by side with him, doing their little in his name and by his strength! How unhappy are those on the side of evil! It is a losing side, and it is a matter wherein to lose is to lose and to be lost for ever. On whose side are you? - C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

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### **Isaiah 40:7 The withering work of the Spirit**

‘The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the Spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.’ Isaiah 40:7 (cf. 1 Peter 1:24)

It is the Spirit's work to wither. I rejoice in our translation, ‘because the Spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it’. It is true the passage may be translated, ‘The wind of the LORD bloweth upon it’. One word, as you know, is used in the Hebrew both for ‘wind’ and ‘Spirit’, and the same is true of the Greek; but let us retain the old translation here, for I conceive it to be the real meaning of the text. The Spirit of God it is that withers the flesh. It is not the devil that killed my self-righteousness. I might be afraid if it were: nor was it myself that humbled myself by a voluntary and needless self-degradation, but it was the Spirit of God. Better to be broken in pieces by the Spirit of God than to be made whole by the flesh! What does the Lord say? ‘I kill’. But what next? ‘I make alive’. He never makes any alive except those he kills. Blessed be the Holy Spirit when he kills me, when he drives the sword through the very bowels of my own merits and my self-confidence, for then he will make me alive. ‘I wound, and I heal’. He never heals those whom he has not wounded. Then blessed be the hand that wounds; let it go on wounding; let it cut and tear; let it lay bare to me myself at my very worst, that I may be driven to self-despair and may fall back upon the free mercy of God and receive it as a poor, guilty, lost, helpless, undone sinner, who casts himself into the arms of sovereign grace, knowing that God must give all, that Christ must be all, that the Spirit must work all and that man must be as clay in the potter's hands, that the Lord may do with him as seems good. Rejoice, dear brother, however low you are brought, for if the Spirit humbles you, he means no evil, but he intends infinite good to your soul. - 365 Days with Spurgeon (Vol 3)

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### **Isaiah 40:9 Get you up to a high mountain.**

Each believer should be thirsting for God, for the living God, and longing to climb the hill of the Lord and see Him face to face. We should not rest content in the mists of the valley when the summit of the mountain beckons us. My soul thirsts to drink deeply of the cup that is reserved for those who reach the mountain's peak and bathe their brows in heaven. How pure are the dews of the hills; how fresh is the mountain air; how abundant is the provision of the dwellers aloft, whose windows look into the New Jerusalem! Many saints are content to live like men in coal mines, who do not see the sun; they eat dust like the serpent when they might taste the food of angels; they are content to wear the miner's garb when they might put on king's robes; tears disfigure their faces when they might anoint them with celestial oil. I am convinced that many a believer pines in a dungeon when he might walk on the palace roof and view the goodly land. Rouse yourself, believer, from your low condition! Discard your laziness, your lethargy, your coldness, or whatever interferes with your sincere and pure love for Christ, your soul's Husband. Make Him the source, the center, and the circumference of your soul's whole range of delight. What fully enchants you to remain in a pit when you may sit on a throne? Do not live in the lowlands of bondage now that mountain liberty is conferred upon you. Do not be satisfied any longer with your tiny attainments, but press forward to things more sublime and heavenly. Aspire to a higher, a nobler, a fuller life. Upward to heaven! Nearer to God! - C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

When will Thou come unto me, Lord?  
Oh come, my Lord most dear!  
Come near, come nearer, nearer still,  
I'm blest when Thou art near.

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### **Isaiah 40:9 “Get thee up into the high mountain.”**

Our knowledge of Christ is somewhat like climbing one of our Welsh mountains. When you are at the base you see but little: the

mountain itself appears to be but one-half as high as it really is. Confined in a little valley, you discover scarcely anything but the rippling brooks as they descend into the stream at the foot of the mountain. Climb the first rising knoll, and the valley lengthens and widens beneath your feet. Go higher, and you see the country for four or five miles round, and you are delighted with the widening prospect. Mount still, and the scene enlarges; till at last, when you are on the summit, and look east, west, north, and south, you see almost all England lying before you. Yonder is a forest in some distant county, perhaps two hundred miles away, and here the sea, and there a shining river and the smoking chimneys of a manufacturing town, or the masts of the ships in a busy port. All these things please and delight you, and you say, "I could not have imagined that so much could be seen at this elevation." Now, the Christian life is of the same order. When we first believe in Christ we see but little of him. The higher we climb the more we discover of his beauties. But who has ever gained the summit? Who has known all the heights and depths of the love of Christ which passes knowledge? Paul, when grown old, sitting grey-haired, shivering in a dungeon in Rome, could say with greater emphasis than we can, "I know whom I have believed," for each experience had been like the climbing of a hill, each trial had been like ascending another summit, and his death seemed like gaining the top of the mountain, from which he could see the whole of the faithfulness and the love of him to whom he had committed his soul. Get thee up, dear friend, into the high mountain. - C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

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#### **Isaiah 40:11 - "He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom."**

Who is he of whom such gracious words are spoken? He is THE GOOD SHEPHERD. Why doth he carry the lambs in his bosom? Because He hath a tender heart, and any weakness at once melts his heart. The sighs, the ignorance, the feebleness of the little ones of his flock draw forth his compassion. It is his office, as a faithful High Priest, to consider the weak. Besides, he purchased them with blood, they are his property: he must and will care for that which cost him so dear. Then he is responsible for each lamb, bound by covenant engagements not to lose one. Moreover, they are all a part of his glory and reward.

But how may we understand the expression, "He will carry them"? Sometimes he carries them by not permitting them to endure much trial. Providence deals tenderly with them. Often they are "carried" by being filled with an unusual degree of love, so that they bear up and stand fast. Though their knowledge may not be deep, they have great sweetness in what they do know. Frequently he "carries" them by giving them a very simple faith, which takes the promise just as it stands, and believingly runs with every trouble straight to Jesus. The simplicity of their faith gives them an unusual degree of confidence, which carries them above the world.

"He carries the lambs in his bosom." Here is boundless affection. Would he put them in his bosom if he did not love them much? Here is tender nearness: so near are they, that they could not possibly be nearer. Here is hallowed familiarity: there are precious love-passages between Christ and his weak ones. Here is perfect safety: in his bosom who can hurt them? They must hurt the Shepherd first. Here is perfect rest and sweetest comfort. Surely we are not sufficiently sensible of the infinite tenderness of Jesus! - C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

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#### **Isaiah 40:11 "He shall gather the lambs with his arm."**

Our good Shepherd has in his flock a variety of experiences, some are strong in the Lord, and others are weak in faith, but he is impartial in his care for all his sheep, and the weakest lamb is as dear to him as the most advanced of the flock. Lambs are wont to lag behind, prone to wander, and apt to grow weary, but from all the danger of these infirmities the Shepherd protects them with his arm of power. He finds new-born souls, like young lambs, ready to perish—he nourishes them till life becomes vigorous; he finds weak minds ready to faint and die—he consoles them and renews their strength. All the little ones he gathers, for it is not the will of our heavenly Father that one of them should perish. What a quick eye he must have to see them all! What a tender heart to care for them all! What a far-reaching and potent arm, to gather them all! In his lifetime on earth he was a great gatherer of the weaker sort, and now that he dwells in heaven, his loving heart yearns towards the meek and contrite, the timid and feeble, the fearful and fainting here below. How gently did he gather me to himself, to his truth, to his blood, to his love, to his church! With what effectual grace did he compel me to come to himself! Since my first conversion, how frequently has he restored me from my wanderings, and once again folded me within the circle of his everlasting arm! The best of all is, that he does it all himself personally, not delegating the task of love, but condescending himself to rescue and preserve his most unworthy servant. How shall I love him enough or serve him worthily? I would fain make his name great unto the ends of the earth, but what can my feebleness do for him? Great Shepherd, add to thy mercies this one other, a heart to love thee more truly as I ought. - C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

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#### **Isaiah 40:11 The lambs and their Shepherd**

'He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom.' Isaiah 40:11

There is another flock in the world—the devil's flock. It is not easy for a Christian man to associate with the world without feeling the influence of it. The worst form of ill association is ungodly marriage. I do not know anything that gives me more satisfaction than to see our brethren and sisters, who have walked in the faith of God, united in marriage—the husband and wife, both fearing and loving

God. It is a delightful spectacle, and bids fair to be the means of building up the church with a generation which shall fear the Lord. But a very fruitful source of ruin to church members is that of a young man or a young woman choosing an ungodly partner in life. They never can expect God's blessing upon it. They tell you sometimes they hope to be the means of their friend's conversion. They have no right to hope such a thing; it so seldom occurs. The much more likely thing is that the ungodly one will drag the other down to his level, than that the godly one shall pull the other up. We are fearful, I say, for the lambs, for we mark some of them that were as earnest as they well could be, and apparently as loving to their Lord and Master, but another love came across their path, and where are they now? Perhaps the house of God sees them no longer, and the theatre or the ballroom is now their delight. When we think of some cases of this kind that have occurred, we tremble for the lambs, and lift up our hearts in prayer to God for them, that they may be kept. - 365 Days with Spurgeon (Vol 2)

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#### **Isaiah 40:11 Jesus and the lambs**

'He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom.' Isaiah 40:11

The divine gentleness of our Master has been shown in the solemn curses with which he effectually guarded the little ones. Observe how sharp they are! 'But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.' To offend is to put a stumbling block in the way. How solemn is that warning, 'Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones!' He must have loved them, or he would not have set such a hedge of fire around them. How many of the promises are made on purpose for the weak. I shall not repeat them, because your own study of the word of God must have shown you how the gracious word is framed to the peculiar condition of distress and weakness under which the lambs are suffering. The Holy Spirit with divine art brings home to the heart promises which had never else appeared to be so full of grace. Brethren, the Lord Jesus Christ's tenderness to his people is further shown in this, that what he requires of them is easy. 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; ... For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.' He does not command the babes to preach. He does not send the weak believers to the forefront of the battle, as David did to Uriah, that they may be slain: he gives them no other burden than this, that they will trust him, and give him all their heart. A yoke, how easy! He shows his gentleness, moreover, in that he accepts the least service that these little ones may offer. A faint prayer, a sigh, a tear—he will receive all these as much as the most eloquent pleadings of an Elijah. The broken alabaster box and the ointment poured out shall be received, though they come from one who has no former character with which to back the gift; the two mites shall not be disowned. The best work sincerely done out of love to Jesus in dependence upon him, he accepts most cheerfully and thus shows to us his real tenderness for the lambs. - 365 Days with Spurgeon (Vol 3)

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#### **Isaiah 40:12 THE HOLLOW OF HIS HAND.**

Are you severely tested with cares, losses, and crosses? Are you dreading tomorrow? Is your business failing? Is a loss staring you in the face? Are you sorrowing over that precious child who lies in a little casket? Do you have a sick wife? Day by day, do you see fresh signs of the great loss that is certainly awaiting you?

My Master has sent me with His blessed precious promises, and they are more than sufficient to comfort every sorrowing saint. Beloved, remember everything that happens to you comes in the course of divine providence. Your loving heavenly Father has foreseen, foreknown, and, I venture to say, foreordained it all. The medicine that you have to drink is bitter, but the unerring Physician has measured the ingredients drop by drop and mixed them in a way that will best work for your highest good.

Nothing in this world happens by chance. Our great God has "measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, measured heaven with a span and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure" (Is. 40:12). Our great God makes the clouds His chariot and He walks on the wings of the wind (Ps. 104:3). This same God cares for you with such special care that He has numbered the very hairs of your head (Matt. 10:30). He even puts your tears in His bottle (Ps. 56:8). You may rest assured that even those experiences that are causing much sorrow are in accord with His eternal counsel and decree.

I trust that these divine promises make you forget your misery and poverty. - C H Spurgeon in "Beside Still Waters"

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**C H SPURGEON Spurgeon's Expositions often have a devotional flavor so be sure to check out what he writes on...**

[Isaiah 40](#)

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#### **Isaiah 40:8. The word of our God shall stand forever.**

The word of God is the water of life; the more ye lave it forth, the fresher it runneth: it is the fire of God's glory; the more ye blow it, the clearer it burneth: it is the corn of the Lord's field; the better ye grind it, the more it yieldeth: it is the bread of heaven; the more it is broken and given forth, the more it remaineth: it is the sword of the Spirit; the more it is scoured, the brighter it shineth. BISHOP JEWEL.

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## Isaiah 40: Nine aspects of man's insufficiency:— D L Moody

- Isaiah 40:6. Grass, flower of field.
- Isaiah 40:15. Drop, small dust, a very little thing.
- Isaiah 40:17. Nothing, less than nothing, vanity.
- Isaiah 40:22. Grasshoppers.
- Isaiah 40:6–8. The frailty of human life. Ps. 103:15, 16; Mt. 6:30; Luke 12:28; 1 Peter 1:24.
- In its short life. Ps. 90:6; James 1:11.
- In its full-blown glory. Isaiah 40:6.
- In its sure decay. Isaiah 40:7; 1 Peter 1:24.
- The permanence of God's Word. Mark 13:31; 1 Peter 1:25; Ps. 119:89.

Proclaimed among men. Col. 1:23.

Centered in the gospel. 1 Peter 1:25.

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### Isaiah 40:31. They that wait upon the Lord shall ... mount up with wings as eagles.

Yes, "they shall mount up with wings as eagles." You know what eagles' wings mean. The eagle is the king of birds, it soars the highest into the heavens. Believers are to live a heavenly life, in the very Presence and Love and Joy of God. They are to live where God lives; they need God's strength to rise there. To them that wait on Him it shall be given.

You know how the eagle wings are obtained. Only in one way—by the eagle birth. You are born of God. You have the eagles' wings. You may not have known it: you may not have used them; but God can and will teach you to use them. ANDREW MURRAY.

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### Isaiah 40:31 The unwearied runner

'They shall run and not be weary.' Isaiah 40:31

Running is a pace which indicates fulness of alacrity. If your servant has an errand to do for you and he creeps along the road, it is probably because he is unwilling; but if he is thoroughly willing, he is usually forward and quick in all his movements. When Abraham saw the three men, strangers, passing by his tent-door, 'he ran to meet them' and 'ran unto the herd' to fetch a calf and killed it; by quickening his pace, the patriarch showed how welcome they were. When Eliezer came to the well, we find that Rebekah 'hasted' and 'ran' to draw water for him and for the camels; her readiness to do an act of kindness was indicated by the pace which she used. When young Samuel thought that Eli called him by night, he arose and we read that 'he ran unto Eli, and said, Here I am; for thou calledst me.' Now, there ought, in the service of our God, always to be a holy promptness and alacrity. I dare say you have noticed, in the gospel according to Mark, how Mark so often uses about our Lord the words 'straightway' and 'immediately'. Mark's is the gospel which describes Christ as a servant, and it is one of the attributes of a good servant that he is prompt at once to do his lord's bidding. Our blessed Saviour straightway did whatever he had undertaken to do. We ought to be ready in the Master's service, and to say at once without demur, 'Here am I; send me.' Foul scorn is it that soldiers of the cross should ever require to be flogged to the battle as the Persian monarch's slaves were in the days of the invasion of Greece; every man among us should be as David, who ran forward to the giant eager for the fray, or as Elisha, who 'left the oxen, and ran after Elijah,' or as Philip, who ran to meet the chariot of the Ethiopian. - 365 Days with Spurgeon (Vol 3)

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### Isaiah 40:31 Renewing strength

'They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength.' Isaiah 40:31

When a man wants his bodily strength renewed his purpose may be effected by eating a good meal. He has grown empty through hunger, and there is nothing in him; he must be filled up with substantial nourishment, and then the human engine will generate fresh force. Oh, you who are weak in spirit, come and feed upon Christ! 'They that wait upon the LORD' in that way, by feeding upon the body and blood of Christ, shall find him to be 'meat indeed', and 'drink indeed', and so they 'shall renew their strength.' Sometimes a man may renew his strength by taking a little rest. He has grown weak through stern labour and long fatigue, and he must be quiet, and repose till he recovers. Oh, you weary, heavy-laden ones, where is there rest for you except in the Christ of God? Oh, come to God, and rest in him, and wait patiently for him! Then shall your peace be as a river, and then shall your strength be restored speedily. We have known strength to be restored by a bath. A weary one has plunged himself into the cool flood, and he has risen quite another man. Oh, for a baptism into the Spirit of God! Oh, to plunge into the Godhead's deepest sea, to throw oneself into the might and majesty of God, to swim in love, upborne by grace! We have known men's strength renewed by breathing their native air. They have risen out of a hot atmosphere into the cool breeze of the mountain side, and the bracing breeze has made them strong again. Oh, to have the breath of the Spirit blowing upon us once again! By him we were born, by him we were quickened, by him we have been revived from former faintness, and it is by breathing his divine life that we shall be filled with life again. - C H Spurgeon - 365 Days with Spurgeon (Vol 5)



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**Isaiah 40:31** I never could understand the order—mount up, run, walk,—until I saw a man riding a bicycle. It is easy to mount, but to walk or go slowly takes a clever rider. So with a convert. - D L Moody

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### **Isaiah 40:25-31**

The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. - Isaiah 40:28

#### TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

“The world is charged with the grandeur of God,” begins a sonnet by the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins.

The poem’s beginning affirms that the glory of God shines forth in nature. But there’s a problem. The divine authority it represents is not recognized or acknowledged by human beings.

Why not? Because human sinfulness has marred the original design: “All is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil; / And wears man’s smudge and shares man’s smell.”

The poem goes on, however, to assert the permanence of the goodness God placed in creation. Despite our sinful, “smearing” effect, this deeper reality remains, testifies to the Creator, and gives hope.

In the sonnet’s concluding couplet, Hopkins alludes to Genesis 1:2, picturing the Spirit hovering over creation--pointing both to its redemption (Ro 8:21-note) and to the new heaven and earth to come.

In this poem and in Isaiah 40, creation reveals God’s overall supremacy (cf. Neh. 9:6; Ps 89:11 [note](#); Isa. 37:16, Isa 48:12, 13). This is the concluding idea for the second part of this month’s study.

Our passage begins with a rhetorical question (Isa 40:25). The answer is obvious--that God has no equals--and Isaiah goes on to give justification for it. Basically, the evidence is in front of our faces: “Lift your eyes.” God made the stars. Not only that, but since He calls them by name and knows that none are missing (cf. Luke 15:3, 4, 5, 6, 7), He must love and care for them (Isa 40:26).

This sounds like a great basis for trusting God. Surely the Creator of the cosmos can handle our lives. Yet because they were in exile, the Israelites complained that God didn’t care about their problems (Isa 40:27).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY Isaiah 40:30-31 would make excellent verses for you to memorize today. Scripture memorization is a spiritual discipline that helps believers fight temptation and fills our minds with biblical truths. “I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you” (Ps. 119:11-[note](#)).

**See Isaiah 40:31 In Depth Commentary - Those Who Wait Upon the LORD will gain new strength!**

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### **Isaiah 40:25-31; Isaiah 40**

#### **Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles. Isaiah 40:31**

Americans don’t get enough rest. Millions, especially middle-aged adults, get less than the recommended seven to eight hours per night. An estimated 50–70 million people suffer from sleep disorders such as sleep apnea and insomnia, and the consequences can be huge. “Sleep debt” can lead, for example, to car accidents, irritability, inability to concentrate at work or school, a weakened immune system, and even chronic depression. Why the lack of sleep? Researchers believe it’s a consequence of longer working hours and more access to and stimulation from media such as television and the Internet. Maybe this is why God’s invitation for us to rest in Him sounds so appealing (Isa 40:28–31)!

This second part of Isaiah often looks beyond messages of conquest and exile to ones dealing with the future return, the distant future of the Messiah, and the still more-distant future of His Millennial Kingdom. Given that many Israelites didn’t even think God’s judgment would come, what must it have been like for the original audience to hear Isaiah’s prophecies of hope?

Today’s reading begins with God saying, “Comfort, comfort my people” (Isa 40:1–2). Then “Elijah” speaks, preparing the way for the Lord (Isa 40:3–5). All four Gospels agree in interpreting these verses as being fulfilled in the ministry of John the Baptist (e.g., Matt. 3:3). So this picture of God coming to His people was ultimately fulfilled in the Incarnation. God Himself came to be with us. Jesus Christ was God’s Final Word or revelation to us. He was and is the coming glorious King!

On this basis, Isaiah exhorted his listeners to renewed faith. God is worthy of our absolute trust because His promises are sure. He’s a tender Shepherd who cares for His people. His wisdom is far above our understanding. His power is evident in the creation. He knows the stars by name. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

APPLY THE WORD You, too, can claim God's promise of strength for the weary: "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom ... [T]hose who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isa 40:28–31).

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## Isaiah 40

### Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. Isaiah 40:31

Every January, millions of people around the world make New Year's resolutions. They decide to become more fit or to lose weight or to read through the Bible or to stop smoking. And by February of each year, millions of people have abandoned their resolutions. According to Professor Nick Chater at Warwick Business School in England, willpower is rarely enough to carry us through on commitments. People who depend on their own willpower nearly always fail to sustain their good intentions.

Reliance on our own power often leads to disappointment. Isaiah 40 explains why we can find comfort in the power of God. Lest His people have any doubts about His care, the chapter opens with God's declaration that what is to follow should encourage and sustain them: "Comfort, comfort my people" (Isaiah 40:1). This text follows the announcement of impending exile and the destruction of Jerusalem—some of the darkest days that the people of Judah would ever experience. But even in His judgment for their sin, God still cared for His people. He still brings them good news (Isaiah 40:9).

The faithlessness of humanity is contrasted with the sovereign power and faithfulness of God. People are like flowers in a field—they stand upright and flourish for a time, but they can't sustain it (Isaiah 40:6–8). The Lord holds the whole world in His hands. His faithfulness sustains all of creation! His power keeps the stars in place (Isaiah 40:12–26).

God's power means that He never grows weary (Isaiah 40:8). And amazingly, the almighty Creator of the universe, the sovereign Lord who sustains all things, cares deeply and passionately for His people: "He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart" (Isaiah 40:11).

APPLY THE WORD The same God who sits in judgment of the nations loves you deeply. The same God who "weighs the islands" (Isaiah 40:15) gathers you in His arms. The same God who never grows weary can renew your strength when you are collapsing on your last legs. If you need comfort, run to Him and trust His power to sustain you.

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## Isaiah 40:27-31

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God. - Isaiah 40:28

### TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

At the time when most people his age have long ago ridden off into the sunset, Bruce Brown is still in the saddle as a volunteer mounted sheriff's deputy in Oklahoma City. At 85, Mr. Brown is believed to be the oldest mounted sheriff's deputy in the country. He spends many hours on his quarter horse, patrolling public events, helping investigators search for evidence, or visiting with children's groups.

People like Bruce Brown are newsworthy because they seem to defy the norm. Our physical limitations usually become more obvious and tend to take over as we get older. Teenagers may think they're immortal, but that illusion fades as the decades add up. Our days on earth are definitely limited.

Imperfect, powerless people like us need a God who does not wear out, run down, or give up. There's only one God who qualifies; the ""eternal"" or ""everlasting"" God of Israel. Only a God who is eternal is able to stand apart from and above every created thing, untouched by the passing of time and the winding down of His creation.

So while our limitations and weaknesses may frustrate us, our eternal God never suffers any loss at all. Here's another name of God in which we can take real comfort. In fact, comfort is the theme of Isaiah 40: ""Comfort, comfort my people, says your God"" (Isa 40:1).

The people of Israel in Isaiah's day needed comfort. The ten tribes of the northern kingdom were under threat from the Assyrian empire, and would be conquered and taken into captivity in 722 B.C.

This was God's judgment for Israel's sin, but those who remained faithful to Him needed to know God had not forgotten them. Even in the middle of judgment, He would give strength to the weary and restore those who had lost their strength.

It was obvious where Israel needed to put its trust. God's people had been carrying on an illicit love affair with idols for many years, but these manmade gods could not compare to the eternal God. They would rot, tarnish, and topple over (Isa 40:18, 19, 20). Israel's trust was misplaced. Where is your trust today?

**TODAY ALONG THE WAY** If you belong to the eternal God, His ""everlasting arms"" are underneath you today. That reality should help put life's concerns in perspective. What is your biggest need right now or your most worrisome circumstance? It may help to write it down on a card, then put beneath it today's Scripture references. Put the card where you will see it often, and remind God of His promise to uphold and strengthen you when you are weary.

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## **Isaiah 40**

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## **Isaiah 40:1-11**

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever. - Isaiah 40:8

### **TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL**

As anyone who has parented toddlers has experienced, the process of raising little ones requires both firmness and gentleness. Children often want to do their own thing, like crawl into the fireplace, run into the street, or throw their toys. Parents find themselves firmly correcting (for the hundredth time!) the inappropriate action. But children also need hugs and encouragement as they develop and learn new skills.

God is the perfect model of the firm and gentle parent. It is the will of God that His people should be comforted even in the worst of times. In the previous chapters of Isaiah, the prophet warned the people of the consequences of their sin, and he foretold of the Babylonian captivity. But before God sent His people into captivity, He furnished them with promises of support and comfort during their times of trouble (Isa 40:1).

"A voice of one calling: 'In the desert prepare the way for the Lord' " is a prophesy of the coming of John the Baptist (v. 3). John the Baptist called people to repent of their sins, thereby preparing them for Christ. God used John the Baptist to initiate the public ministry of Jesus after His baptism.

Isaiah 40 also prophesies the coming of Christ, who was and is God, that He would come into the world in a physical form. "And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it" (Isa 40:5). At Christ's first coming many didn't accept Him, so for all people to see, Isaiah had to be referring to the Second Coming. This is reinforced a few verses later, "See the Sovereign LORD comes with power" (Isa 40:10).

The “good tidings” of Isa 40:9 is that God is here. This was also the message of John the Baptist (cf. John 1:29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34). And it is the message of the gospel. Christ was born—God was here on earth. He came to take away our sins.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY God comforted His people in the Old Testament through the prophets. Jesus came to earth and brought comfort as the Good Shepherd. He laid down His life for us, His sheep (John 10:15).

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### **Isaiah 40:25–31**

#### **Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. Isaiah 40:31**

Rick Hoyt was 15 years old when he told his father, Dick, that he wanted to participate in a 5-mile run to support an injured student-athlete. But Rick has cerebral palsy and is confined to a wheelchair—so Dick agreed to push his son so that he could race. They finished next to last. That night, Rick told his father, “Dad, when I’m running, it feels like I’m not handicapped.” Dick committed to race again with his son and Team Hoyt was born. Over the past 37 years they have completed over 1,000 races—including marathons and triathlons—together.

For the rest of our study this month, we’re going to examine what Scripture says about the results of hope. We have already seen that hope in God will shape the way we live, but the Bible also describes significant benefits and blessings that flow from hope in the Lord.

Our passage today opens with God’s declaration that He is beyond compare—He alone is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe (Isaiah 40:25–26). As the old saints in the church used to say, “God is God all by Himself!” This is not a mere theological point. God is specifically addressing the charge that He had forgotten His people (Isaiah 40:27). On the contrary, God is the One who delivers and saves!

The beautiful poetry of these verses has inspired people for generations. God, the omnipotent Creator who never grows weary or uninterested, is willing to give power and strength to us when we are faint and on the verge of collapse (Isaiah 40:28–29). Our hope in Him results in renewed strength to go on despite our circumstances. God offers us abundant resources so that we can run the race laid out before us (see Heb. 12:1).

**APPLY THE WORD** What race has God laid out for you? It might not be an actual marathon, but perhaps it is the challenge of loving a difficult family member, or being faithful in an unrewarding job, or dealing with a chronic health condition. Whatever the race, God has promised that your hope in Him will yield endurance and strength to continue!

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### **Isaiah 40:27-31**

Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles. - Isaiah 40:31

#### **TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL**

According to a study by Dr. Daniel Mroczek of Fordham University, youth is not a guarantee that a person will be happy. Mroczek studied people from ages 25 to 74, and found that the older people had a greater sense of well-being than their younger counterparts. He wrote, 'There was a positive relationship between age and well-being; as age went up, well-being went up. As people get older, they are able to regulate their happiness. They have a sense of wisdom that few younger people have yet attained.'

Studies like this suggest that the so-called golden or retirement years don't have to signal the end of anyone's productive period. If a general cross-section of people in this age group can report a strong sense of well-being, imagine the level of peace, contentment, and satisfaction senior Christians ought to be able to report.

That's not always the case, though, and today's reading has something important to say about the issue. It's true that Isaiah 40 was not written specifically to older people. But it holds a message of hope for two of the problems older people often face.

The first is a sense of being forgotten, even abandoned in some cases. Isaiah told his readers, in effect, 'How can you say God has forgotten you? Have you forgotten that He's the eternal God, the Creator of everything? He's far too powerful and loving and strong to ever get tired.

Then the prophet addressed a second problem his readers faced, which many seniors also deal with a sense of weariness and weakness, whether physical or emotional or spiritual. God is not only beyond growing weak Himself, He delights in taking weak and tired people and giving them a new surge of strength.

But there's a condition attached to this promise. God reserves special strength for people who make Him the focus of their hope.

This is talking about more than just salvation. A person whose hope is in God is someone who has turned from every other possible source of security and has staked his or her life completely on God. That's what it takes to soar like an eagle.

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Earlier we gave you Chuck Swindoll's formula for joyful, productive living as an older Christian (see [study](#)): 'Live with the realities of the present, anticipate the future with hope, and let go of past disappointments.' This is a good test to help you answer the question of whether you are living life to its fullest. We encourage all of our readers today to measure their daily lives against these standards, and make adjustments if necessary.

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#### **Isaiah 40:1 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people saith your God.**

There is a considerable interval between the preceding chapter and this. The Jews are now nearing the term of their long and bitter sufferings; their fiery trials have done their work.

Comfort, because sin is forgiven. — "Look to the wounds of Jesus, brother," said Staupitz to Luther. At the foot of the cross alone can sinners be comforted. We need not only the assurance of forgiveness, but some knowledge of the way in which it has been obtained, and the grounds on which it is based. Our hearts are never truly comforted till we learn that God is faithful and just when He forgives.

Comfort, because God is on his way to deliver.— The imagery is borrowed from the progress of an Oriental prince or conqueror. Great gangs of men are sent to level the ways before him. Be of good cheer, the prophet says; your God shall come with a strong hand. See the mountains become a way; the crooked is made straight and the rough places smooth. The glorious Lord comes to deliver the afflicted from his strong oppressor, and all flesh shall see it together.

Comfort, because the Strong Deliverer has a tender heart. — He comes as a mighty one, but He feeds his flock like a shepherd. Strong and sweet, mighty and merciful. The Everlasting Father, but the Prince of Peace. Those arms sustain the universe, but they gather lambs.

Comfort, because He faints not, neither is weary. — Others may tire after awhile. Physical strength droops and declines. Time seems long. The current may sweep lovers and friends out of our reach, but Thou remainest! "The Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary." - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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#### **Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.—Isa. 40.3**

With this chapter begins the second part of this book. The theme of this part is that of peace. In its first section (Isa 40-48) the Purpose of Peace is discussed. In the second section (Isa 49-57) the Prince of Peace is described. In the third section (Isa 58-65) the Programme of Peace is declared. The words we have stressed occur in the Prologue of the whole movement. They catch up the ultimate thought of the first part of the book. Glance back at Isaiah 35. There we had the prophetic outlook upon the restoration of a lost order for the world, following upon the description of the desolation produced in the day of Jehovah's vengeance, contained in Isaiah 34. This restoration would be that of bringing the wilderness and the desert to fruitfulness (Isa 35.1). Now God is to be revealed in the procedure which brings this result; and in these words the people of God are called upon to co-operate with Him by preparing His way in the wilderness, by making straight His highway in the desert. The keynote of the prologue is the keynote of this second half of the prophecy. It is found in the words, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people." After the prologue follows a glorious description of the majesty of Jehovah; in the course of which, He is seen in His creative might and wisdom; idols are placed in contrast with Him; and His power and readiness to enable men is declared. In these facts of the majesty of Jehovah the first inspiration of true comfort is found for the sons of men. All this makes the appeal of this verse the more arresting and suggestive. This glorious God, majestic beyond compare, in might and in wisdom, yet calls the faithful among men to prepare His way, to make straight His highway. Let it at once be said that they do this when they yield to Him their complete loyalty, and confide in Him alone. - G Campbell Morgan

## ISAIAH 41

#### **Isaiah 41:10 Look not around thee, for I am thy God. (R.V., marg.)**

We are all tempted to look around us, to see who is prepared to stand by and help us. We are apt, like the apostle, to look at the winds and waves. Not so, says our God. Look not around, but look off to Me; look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.

These exceeding great and precious promises quicken our desire to be able to establish our lineage as belonging to Abraham. We very gladly catch at the apostle's assurance that those who have his faith may claim to be his children. It is good to know that, Gentiles as we are, we may be included in the Israel of God.

Now, troubled soul, look unto these words. They are spoken by one who cannot lie, and spoken for thee. They are as much meant for thee as though they had never been claimed by another; and God is prepared to fulfill them in thy life to the brim. He is with thee at this moment, whilst thou art pondering these words. He is thy God, and will never act unworthily of thy trust. Where thou art weakest and most easily overcome, He will strengthen thee. Where thou needest help, He will give his, so that thy difficult task shall be easily mastered. And when thou art too weary to walk; when no more strength remains in thee; when thou sinkest on the battlefield or the steep hill — He will uphold thee. Dost thou doubt? Behold at his right hand, Jesus sits, thy Lover and Savior. It is a right hand of righteousness, that can never act unworthily of itself, or fail the trusting soul.

“The steps of faith

Fall on the seeming void — and find

The rock beneath!” - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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#### **Isaiah 41:1 - “Let the people renew their strength.”**

All things on earth need to be renewed. No created thing continueth by itself. “Thou renewest the face of the year,” was the Psalmist’s utterance. Even the trees, which wear not themselves with care, nor shorten their lives with labour, must drink of the rain of heaven and suck from the hidden treasures of the soil. The cedars of Lebanon, which God has planted, only live because day by day they are full of sap fresh drawn from the earth. Neither can man’s life be sustained without renewal from God. As it is necessary to repair the waste of the body by the frequent meal, so we must repair the waste of the soul by feeding upon the Book of God, or by listening to the preached Word, or by the soul-fattening table of the ordinances. How depressed are our graces when means are neglected! What poor starvelings some saints are who live without the diligent use of the Word of God and secret prayer! If our piety can live without God it is not of divine creating; it is but a dream; for if God had begotten it, it would wait upon him as the flowers wait upon the dew. Without constant restoration we are not ready for the perpetual assaults of hell, or the stern afflictions of heaven, or even for the strifes within. When the whirlwind shall be loosed, woe to the tree that hath not sucked up fresh sap, and grasped the rock with many intertwined roots. When tempests arise, woe to the mariners that have not strengthened their mast, nor cast their anchor, nor sought the haven. If we suffer the good to grow weaker, the evil will surely gather strength and struggle desperately for the mastery over us; and so, perhaps, a painful desolation, and a lamentable disgrace may follow. Let us draw near to the footstool of divine mercy in humble entreaty, and we shall realize the fulfilment of the promise, “They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.” - C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

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#### **C H SPURGEON Spurgeon's Expositions often have a devotional flavor so be sure to check out what he writes on...**

[Isaiah 41](#)

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#### **Isaiah 41:9 “Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee.”**

If we have received the grace of God in our hearts, its practical effect has been to make us God’s servants. We may be unfaithful servants, we certainly are unprofitable ones, but yet, blessed be his name, we are his servants, wearing his livery, feeding at his table, and obeying his commands. We were once the servants of sin, but he who made us free has now taken us into his family and taught us obedience to his will. We do not serve our Master perfectly, but we would if we could. As we hear God’s voice saying unto us, “Thou art my servant,” we can answer with David, “I am thy servant; thou hast loosed my bonds.” But the Lord calls us not only his servants, but his chosen ones—“I have chosen thee.” We have not chosen him first, but he hath chosen us. If we be God’s servants, we were not always so; to sovereign grace the change must be ascribed. The eye of sovereignty singled us out, and the voice of unchanging grace declared, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love.” Long ere time began or space was created God had written upon his heart the names of his elect people, had predestinated them to be conformed unto the image of his Son, and ordained them heirs of all the fulness of his love, his grace, and his glory. What comfort is here! Has the Lord loved us so long, and will he yet cast us away? He knew how stiffnecked we should be, he understood that our hearts were evil, and yet he made the choice. Ah! our Saviour is no fickle lover. He doth not feel enchanted for awhile with some gleams of beauty from his church’s eye, and then afterwards cast her off because of her unfaithfulness. Nay, he married her in old eternity; and it is written of Jehovah, “He hateth putting away.” The eternal choice is a bond upon our gratitude and upon his faithfulness which neither can disown. - C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

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#### **Isaiah 41:10. Fear thou not for I am with thee; he not dismayed, for I am thy God**

Fear in all its forms is a kind of atheism. The man who is afraid has lost faith; he no longer believes in God.

That which justifies courage in facing the possibilities of life is the conviction that its master is our Lord as well; that it is so framed that “all things work together for good” to those who are obedient to the laws of life; that our little plans are embraced in a greater and wiser plan; that “light is sown for the righteous.”

Many a man looks backward and thanks God for the events in his life which once seemed disastrous, but which, in the clearer light

of time, disclose the beauty of noble opportunity.

#### A Wonderful Guarantee

“I will strengthen thee.”—Isaiah 41:10

WHEN called to serve or to suffer, we take stock of our strength, and we find it to be less than we thought, and less than we need. But let not our heart sink within us while we have such a word as this to fall back upon, for it guarantees us all that we can possibly need. God has strength omnipotent; that strength He can communicate to us, and His promise is that He will do so. He will be the food of our souls and the health of our hearts; thus, He will give us strength. There is no telling how much power God can put into a man. When divine strength comes, human weakness is no more a hindrance.

Do we not remember seasons of labor and trial in which we received such special strength that we wondered at ourselves? In the midst of danger, we were calm; under bereavement, we were resigned; in slander, we were self-contained; and in sickness, we were patient. The fact is that God gives unexpected strength when unusual trials come upon us. We rise out of our feeble selves. Cowards play the man, foolish ones have wisdom given them, and the silent receive in the self-same hour what they shall speak. My own weakness makes me shrink, but God's promise makes me brave. Lord, strengthen me “according to Thy word.

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#### Isaiah 41:10 Help from Without

“Yea, I will help thee.”—Isaiah 41:10

YESTERDAY'S promise secured us strength for what we have to do, but this guarantees us aid in cases where we cannot act alone. The Lord says, “I will help thee.” Strength within is supplemented by help without. God can raise us up allies in our warfare if so it seems good in His sight; and even if He does not send us human assistance, He himself will be at our side, and this is better still. “Our August Ally” is better than legions of mortal helpers.

His help is timely: He is a very present help in time of trouble. His help is very wise: He knows how to give each man help meet and fit for him. His help is most effectual though vain is the help of man. His help is more than help, for he bears all the burden and supplies all the need. “The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me.

Because He has already been our help, we feel confidence in Him for the present and the future. Our prayer is, “Lord be thou my helper”; our experience is, “The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities”; our expectation is, “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, whence cometh my help”; and our song soon will be, “Thou, Lord, hast holpen me.” - C H Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook

#### Isaiah 41:10 Joyful Security

“I will uphold thee with the righthand of my righteousness.”—Isaiah 41:10

FEAR of falling is wholesome. To be venturesome is no sign of wisdom. Times come to us when we feel that we must go down unless we have a very special support. Here we have it. God's right hand is a grand thing to lean upon. Mind, it is not only His hand, though it keepeth heaven and earth in their places, but His right hand: His power united with skill; His power where it is most dexterous. Nay, this is not all, it is written, “I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” That hand which He uses to maintain His holiness and to execute His royal sentences—this shall be stretched out to hold up His trusting ones. Fearful is our danger, but joyful is our security. The man whom God upholds, devils cannot throw down.

Weak may be our feet. but almighty is God's right hand. Rough may be the road, but Omni-potence is our upholding. We may boldly go forward. We shall not fall. Let us lean continually where all things lean. God will not withdraw His strength, for His righteousness is there as well: He will be faithful to His promise, and faithful to His Son and therefore faithful to us. How happy we ought to be! Are

**Isaiah 41:10.** Fear and despair are high points of atheism. - D L Moody

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**Isaiah 41:10** “Fear thou not; for I am with thee. ...”

Five times in this verse you get some form of the pronoun thou, and five times you get the pronoun I. Whatever there may be of you, there shall be as much of God. Whatever there may be of your weakness, there shall be as much of God's strength. Whatever there may be of your sin, there shall be as much of God's mercy to meet it all. - C H Spurgeon

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**Isaiah 41:10. I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.**

If God bear us in His arms when we are children, yet when we are well grown He looks we should go on our own feet; it is enough that He upholds us, though He carry us not. BISHOP HALL.

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**Isaiah 41:10 “I will strengthen thee.”**

God has a strong reserve with which to discharge this engagement; for he is able to do all things. Believer, till thou canst drain dry the ocean of omnipotence, till thou canst break into pieces the towering mountains of almighty strength, thou never needest to fear. Think not that the strength of man shall ever be able to overcome the power of God. Whilst the earth's huge pillars stand, thou hast enough reason to abide firm in thy faith. The same God who directs the earth in its orbit, who feeds the burning furnace of the sun, and trims the lamps of heaven, has promised to supply thee with daily strength. While he is able to uphold the universe, dream not that he will prove unable to fulfil his own promises. Remember what he did in the days of old, in the former generations. Remember how he spake and it was done; how he commanded, and it stood fast. Shall he that created the world grow weary? He hangeth the world upon nothing; shall he who doth this be unable to support his children? Shall he be unfaithful to his word for want of power? Who is it that restrains the tempest? Doth not he ride upon the wings of the wind, and make the clouds his chariots, and hold the ocean in the hollow of his hand? How can he fail thee? When he has put such a faithful promise as this on record, wilt thou for a moment indulge the thought that he has outpromised himself, and gone beyond his power to fulfil? Ah, no! Thou canst doubt no longer. - C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

O thou who art my God and my strength, I can believe that this promise shall be fulfilled, for the boundless reservoir of thy grace can never be exhausted, and the overflowing storehouse of thy strength can never be emptied by thy friends or rifled by thine enemies.

“Now let the feeble all be strong,  
And make Jehovah's arm their song.”

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**Isaiah 41:10 FEAR NOT.**

In trouble, the Lord will always be near. If you have a Gethsemane, if you have to drink the bitter cup, the Lord will be with you. His presence will encourage you, and you will be able to say, “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will” (Matt. 26:39).

Do you say, “I am sick and depressed. I wish that I had more of life's comforts, but my resources are sadly limited?” Your Savior was tested in all points as you are (Heb. 4:15), but He always set the Lord before Him. Thus He was able to say, “O LORD, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot. The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; yes, I have a good inheritance” (Ps. 16:5).

Let everything go. If God is with you, you will be upheld. Let friends die one after another. Let earthly comforts fade like autumn leaves. If you set the Lord before you, there is fullness of joy in God's every attribute. There is heaven in every glimpse of Jesus' face, overwhelming bliss in every drop of Jehovah's everlasting love. You will not fail. You will not be discouraged. You will even sing His praises in the fiercest fires.

To you He says, “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand” (Is. 41:10). “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.” When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you” (Is. 43:2).

**Isaiah 41:10 I WILL STRENGTHEN YOU.**

When called to serve or to suffer, we take inventory of our strength and find it to be less than we thought and less than we need. Do not let your heart fail when you have this promise to fall back on, for it guarantees all that you can possibly need. God has strength omnipotent, and He can communicate that strength to you, and His promise is that He will do so. He will be the food of your soul and the health of your heart, and thus He will give you strength. There is no telling how much power God can put into a person. When divine strength comes, human weakness is no longer a hindrance.



Do we remember times of labor and trial when we received such special strength that we wondered at ourselves? In the midst of danger, we were calm. Under bereavement, we were resigned. In slander, we were self-contained. In sickness, we were patient. The fact is that God gives unexpected strength when unusual trials come. We rise out of our feeble selves. Cowards play the hero, foolish ones have wisdom given them, and the silent receive in that moment what they shall speak.

My own weakness makes me shrink, but God's promise makes me brave. Lord, strengthen me according to Your Word.

### **Isaiah 41:10 I WILL HELP YOU.**

Yesterday's promise secured strength for what we have to do today, but this promise guarantees help when we cannot act alone. The Lord says, "I will help you." Strength within is supplemented by help from without. God can raise up allies in our warfare if it seems good in His sight. Even if He doesn't send human assistance, He Himself will be at our side, and this is even better. "Our august Ally" is superior to thousands of human helpers.

His help is timely, for He is a very present help in time of trouble (Ps. 46:1). His help is wise, for He knows how to give what is good for us. His help is effective, though futile is the help of friends. His help is more than help, for He carries all the burdens and supplies, all the needs. "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Heb. 13:6). Because He has already been our help, we feel confidence in Him for the present and the future.

Our prayer is, "LORD, be my helper" (Ps. 30:10).

Our experience is, "The Spirit also helps in our weaknesses" (Rom 8:26).

Our expectation is, "I will lift up my eyes to the hills—from whence comes my help? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth" (Ps. 121:1).

Our song will be, "You, LORD, have helped me and comforted me" (Ps. 86:17). - All above by C H Spurgeon from "Beside Still Waters"

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### **Isaiah 41:10 The sweet harp of consolation**

'Fear thou not; for I am with thee.' Isaiah 41:10

As I thought of the life of faith, I saw before my eyes, as in a vision, a lofty staircase of light and, led by an invisible hand, I mounted step by step; when I had ascended long and far, it turned and turned again and again. I could see no supports to this elevated staircase, no pillars of iron, no props of stone—it seemed to hang in air. As I climbed, I looked up to see whither the staircase went, but I saw no further than the step on which I stood, except that now and then the clouds of light above me parted asunder, and I thought I saw the throne of the Eternal and the heaven of his glory. My next step seemed to be upon the air, and yet when I boldly put down my foot I found it firm as adamant beneath me. I looked back on the steps which I had trodden and was amazed, but I dared not tarry, for 'forward' was the voice which urged me on, and I knew, for faith had told me, that the winding stair would end at last beyond the sun, moon and stars in the excellent glory. As now and then I gazed down into the depths out of which the stair had lifted me, I shuddered at my fate should I slip from my standing, or should the next step plunge me into the abyss! Over the edge of that on which I stood I gazed with awe, for I saw nothing but a gaping void of black darkness and into this I must plunge my foot in the faith of finding another step beneath it. I should have been unable to advance and would have sat down in utter despair had I not heard the word from above of one in whom I trusted, saying, 'Fear thou not; for I am with thee'. I knew that my mysterious guide could not err. I felt that infinite faithfulness would not bid me take a step if it were not safe; and therefore mounting still, I stand at this hour happy and rejoicing, though my faith be all above my own comprehension. (365 Days with Spurgeon)

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### **Isaiah 41:1 Solemn pleadings for revival**

'Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.' Isaiah 41:1

The text is a challenge to the heathen to enter into a debate with the living God. The Lord bids them argue at their best, and let the controversy be calmly carried out to its issues, so as to be decided once for all. He bids them be quiet, reflect and consider, in order that with renewed strength they may come into the discussion and defend their gods if they can. He urges them not to bring flippant arguments, but such as have cost them thought and have weight in them, if such arguments can be. He bids them be quiet till they are prepared to speak, and then, when they can produce their strong reasons and set their cause in the best possible light, he challenges them to enter the lists and see if they can maintain for a moment that their gods are gods or anything better than deceit and falsehood. We also who worship the Lord God Most High have a controversy with him. We have not seen his church and his cause prospering in the world as we could desire; as yet heathenism is not put to the rout by Christianity, neither does the truth everywhere trample down error; nations are not born in a day; the kingdoms of the world have not become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. We desire to reason with God about this, and he himself instructs us how to prepare for this sacred debate. He bids us be silent, consider and then draw near to him with holy boldness, plead with him, produce our cause and bring forth our strong reasons. It seems to me that at the beginning of the year I cannot suggest to Christian people a more urgent topic than this, that we should plead with God that he would display among us greater works of grace than as yet our eyes have seen. (365 Days

### **Isaiah 41:8 The friend of God**

'Thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.' Isaiah 41:8

'And he was called the Friend of God.' James 2:23

Jesus himself invites us to live and act and be his friends. Surely none of us will neglect any gracious attainment which lies within the region of the possible. None of us will be content with a scanty measure of grace, when we may have life more abundantly. I trust you are not so foolish as to say, 'If I may but get to heaven by the skin of my teeth, I shall not care about what I am on the road.' This would be wicked talk, and, if you speak thus, I am afraid you will never get to heaven at all. He that is being prepared for glory is always hungry after the largest measure of grace. He who is born of God desires his Father's love while he is yet a child, and has no idea of waiting for it till he comes of age and enters upon his estate. Let me have as much of heaven, even now, as I can have. Yes, let me now be the friend of God. The other day there landed on the shores of France a boatful of people sodden with rain and saltwater; they had lost all their luggage and had nothing but what they stood upright in: they were glad, indeed, to have been saved from a wreck. It was well that they landed at all, but when it is my lot again to cross to France, I trust I shall put my foot on shore in a better plight than that. I would prefer to cross the Channel in comfort and land with pleasure. There is all this difference between being 'saved ... so as by fire', and having an abundant entrance 'ministered unto' us into the kingdom. Let us enjoy heaven on the road to heaven. Why not? Instead of being fished up as castaways, stranded upon the shores of mercy, let us take our passage on board the well-appointed Liner of Free Grace; let us, if possible, go in the first cabin, enjoying all the comforts of the way and having fellowship with the great Captain of our Salvation. Why should we think it enough to be mere stowaways? (365 Days with Spurgeon)

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### **Isaiah 41:10 Away with fear**

'Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.'

It is usually sinful to be afraid and dismayed, because such a state of mind almost always results from unbelief. Have you ever thought what a great sin unbelief is? We talk about it and confess it, but we do not sufficiently consider the deep heinousness of it. We will confess unbelief of God without a blush, and yet nothing could make us acknowledge dishonesty to man. Tell me which of these two is the worse fault. Is not unbelief a robbery of God, a treason felony against him? If I were in conversation with any one of you, and you should say to me, 'Sir, I cannot believe you,' nothing you could say would sting me more. It is a very strong thing to say to anyone, 'I cannot believe you.' Why, if there were two of the lowest men or women fighting in a street quarrel, and one of them said to the other, 'I cannot believe a word you say,' the worst slut would feel the insult. Every truthful man feels that he has a right to be believed. He speaks upon the honour of an honest man, and if you say, 'I cannot believe you,' and even begin to lament that you have no faith in him, the reflection is not upon yourself, but on the person you cannot believe. And shall it ever come to this, that God's own children shall say that they cannot believe their God? Oh, sin of sins! It takes away the very Godhead from God, for if God be not true, he is not God; and if he be not fit to be believed, neither is he fit to be adored, for a God whom you cannot trust you cannot worship. Oh, God-killing traitor, you sin of unbelief! May we be delivered from it, and not think it light or trifling, but shake it off from us as Paul shook off the viper into the fire. (365 Days with Spurgeon)

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### **Isaiah 41:13. I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand.**

Don't try to hold God's hand; let Him hold yours. Let Him do the holding, and you do the trusting. WEBB-PEPLOE.

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Keep silence before Me.—Isa. 41.1

With these challenging words, the prophet introduces a message, which may be described as the manifesto of Jehovah. It occupies this and the following chapters. In the next chapter (Isa 42) we shall find its central proclamation. This is introductory and preparatory. In it there are four movements. The first (Isa 41:1-7) constitutes the challenge of Jehovah to the nations concerning the advance of a foe from the east, in which He claims that this powerful one is under the government of His will, and satirizes the attempts of men to secure safety by making new gods. The second (Isa 41:8-20) has to do with Israel, and declares the presence and protection of Jehovah. The third (Isa 41:21-24) challenges false gods to prove their divinity by prediction. The last (Isa 41:25-29) again affirms that the coming of the foe is by the will and act of God; and claims that the failure of others, whether gods or men, to foretell is proof of their vanity. The words with which all this begins might be rendered, "In silence listen to Me," and this is ever the word of God to men. The persistent clamour of many voices in the world drowns too constantly the voice of God. We are anxious to see the newspapers in order to learn what kings, statesmen, labour leaders, and even preachers, are saying, and the babel of their confused speech prevents our listening in silence for God. The emphasis on the value of prediction as evidence of Deity should not be over-looked. It is the key to all that follows. To make the prophetic messages which follow mere interpretations of contemporary events is to devitalize them. Here the prophet was patently conscious of these events, but was seeing through and beyond them, to

greater things. Moreover, this element obtains still. Some of the things, then future, have now become history. Some of them are not yet fulfilled. Let us then keep silence, that we may hear these words of Jehovah. - G Campbell Morgan

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### **Isaiah 41:14 "I will help thee, saith the Lord."**

This morning let us hear the Lord Jesus speak to each one of us: "I will help thee." "It is but a small thing for me, thy God, to help thee. Consider what I have done already. What! not help thee? Why, I bought thee with my blood. What! not help thee? I have died for thee; and if I have done the greater, will I not do the less? Help thee! It is the least thing I will ever do for thee; I have done more, and will do more. Before the world began I chose thee. I made the covenant for thee. I laid aside my glory and became a man for thee; I gave up my life for thee; and if I did all this, I will surely help thee now. In helping thee, I am giving thee what I have bought for thee already. If thou hadst need of a thousand times as much help, I would give it thee; thou requirest little compared with what I am ready to give. 'Tis much for thee to need, but it is nothing for me to bestow. 'Help thee?' Fear not! If there were an ant at the door of thy granary asking for help, it would not ruin thee to give him a handful of thy wheat; and thou art nothing but a tiny insect at the door of my all-sufficiency. 'I will help thee.' "

O my soul, is not this enough? Dost thou need more strength than the omnipotence of the United Trinity? Dost thou want more wisdom than exists in the Father, more love than displays itself in the Son, or more power than is manifest in the influences of the Spirit? Bring hither thine empty pitcher! Surely this well will fill it. Haste, gather up thy wants, and bring them here—thine emptiness, thy woes, thy needs. Behold, this river of God is full for thy supply; what canst thou desire beside? Go forth, my soul, in this thy might. The Eternal God is thine helper!

"Fear not, I am with thee, oh, be not dismay'd!  
I, I am thy God, and will still give thee aid."

## **ISAIAH 42**

### **Isaiah 42:3 A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench.**

This is characteristic of Jesus Christ. Our great enemy argues so differently. He says, See! it is but a piece of smoldering tow; blow it out, it is not worth conserving. Jesus says, It is only smoldering, but there is the more reason why I should blow it into a flame. Satan says, That is only a bruised reed, trample it beneath thy feet; Jesus says, Because it is so bruised, it needs very special tenderness, care, and skill, to make anything of it: let Me have it. Satan says, That is only a charred brand plucked out of the fire, cast it back again, it will never be of any use; Jesus answers, It cost Me too much to pluck it out, and I am not going to cast it back again; besides, if there is only a little left of solid wood, it needs the more solicitude to preserve it, and use what there is.

Weakness, weariness, and sin, never fail to draw forth the deepest sympathy from the Lord Jesus. Nothing lays a stronger hold upon Him, or brings Him more swiftly to our side. At home our mother was always sweet, but sweetest when we were ill or weary. It almost tempted us to sham, so as to be more coaxed. And Christ's love is like mother's. You need not sham with Him, you are weak and broken enough. But those who are most bruised and struggling get the tenderest manifestations of his love. He resembles the strong man, with muscles like iron, and who stands like a rock, but who will bend in tears and tenderness over his cripple-child.

"It shall be

A Face like my face that receives thee, a Man like to me,

Thou shalt love and be loved by for ever; a Hand like this hand

Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!" - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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**C H SPURGEON Spurgeon's Expositions often have a devotional flavor so be sure to check out what he writes on...**

[Isaiah 42](#)

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### **Isaiah 42:3. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench.**

He dost not wait until we are at our fairest and best. He stoops to help us at our deadest and dullest, our poorest and worst, when life is almost gone out and the fire is at its last spark. He can help us and keep us in the most trying circumstances, however bleak winds blow, whatever biting frosts come. A most gracious, gentle, pitiful Saviour is He, and as mighty as He is gentle. Press up to Him; go on your way communing with Him. Cleave to Him, your Life; rest in Him, your loving Lord; exult in Him, your Almighty Saviour. MARK GUY PEARSE.

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**Isaiah 42:6. Called—held—kept—used. - D L Moody**

One day Miss F. R. Havergal asked her attendant to read this verse: "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee." "Well," she said, "I will just go home on that"—and she died that day.

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### **Isaiah 42:8-13**

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God. - 1 Peter 2:9

#### **TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL**

Gloria Matthews faced a mother's worst nightmare. She had gone to visit her parents in another state when her husband called with some very bad news. Their youngest daughter had not returned home from an evening concert. Gloria and her husband Jim did everything they could, but their youngest child would never return.

Some six months after their daughter's disappearance, Gloria was driving to work asking God for answers. She reports that it was as if God spoke to her and said, "Gloria, will you give me honor and glory even if you never learn what happened?"

The Matthews family has never completely recovered from their loss. However, the encounter with God on her way to work began to change the way Gloria thought. She has started to develop a God-centered life. It is the same kind of thinking that can assist any believer in developing the character trait of goodness.

As we learned yesterday, goodness refers to the pursuit of that which is excellent and often occurs when we consistently think the best of other people. But the word goodness can also be translated as "praises," as in the case of 1 Peter 2:9-note. Both the apostle Peter and the prophet Isaiah were calling their audience to praise God.

The people of Israel had every reason to offer up praise to God. As we see in our text, God declares Himself as the Lord, the one who redeems His people and is sovereign over all things. But in addition, He declares new things that will take place for Israel (Isa. 42:9). The prophet had been prophesying judgment for the nation's rebellion against God. But then Isaiah invites everyone and everything to give God glory and praise (Isa 42:10, 11, 12). And the reason for such praise was because God would rescue His people and defeat their enemies once again.

**TODAY ALONG THE WAY** Yesterday you started a list containing the names of people close to you in some way. In addition you started to record specific statements that were positive about their lives. It would be good for you to add God's name to that list today. Try to identify as many things as you can about God and His goodness in your own life. As you do, you will be training yourself to be an individual who will be characterized by goodness.

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### **Isaiah 42:1-7; Isaiah 41-42**

#### **'I myself will help you,' declares the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Isaiah 41:14**

The alternate shorter reading for today is the first of the four well-known Servant Songs of Isaiah. From our perspective in time, we know that the Messiah or Redeemer of whom Isaiah prophesied was Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He was the ultimate Servant, specially chosen for the mission that reshaped world history forever. This is not theological speculation—we have it on the authority of the New Testament. As we've mentioned, Isaiah is the Old Testament book most quoted there, and the Servant Songs are quoted in direct and unmistakable reference to Christ. Matthew, for instance, quotes today's reading as being fulfilled in Jesus (Matt. 12:15–21).

Prophecy has layers. While Christ is the ultimate Servant, there are other meanings and foreshadowings. In today's reading, God's servant is also Cyrus, the Persian king who would defeat Babylon in 539 B.C. (he's named later in Isaiah 44:28). His "service" will be to carry out part of God's plan for history, even though he was a pagan unbeliever and unaware of His plan. Another layer is that just as Cyrus will be God's servant individually, so the Israelites are God's servant collectively (Isaiah 41:8–10). It is not that they are intrinsically worthy or superior; what sets them apart is simply that they have been chosen by God. The same God who orchestrates history raises up springs for the thirsty... and in place of Him Isaiah's listeners had chosen to worship sticks of wood! Their ears were open but they heard nothing (Isaiah 42:20).

The Servant embodies God's redemptive plan and will lead Israel to what it is meant to be. God's plan is about more than one ethnic group, though, since one thing the Servant will do is bring light to the Gentiles. He will also bring healing, freedom, and justice to all nations. These achievements won't come easily, which is one reason why the praise that follows pictures God as a Divine Warrior (Isaiah 42:10–17).

**APPLY THE WORD** God is pictured in today's reading as a Helper (Isaiah 41:13–14; cf. Heb. 13:6). A fitting application, then, would

be to imitate God by doing an act of service or helping someone. Perhaps you know a mom who could use a babysitting break, an elderly person who would like a visit and some quality conversation, or a person recovering from illness who could use a hot meal brought to their home. Faith sees these kinds of needs and rejoices in doing something to meet them (cf. James 2:15–16).

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### **Isaiah 42:1-7 Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight. - Isaiah 42:1**

TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL Charles Colson is known around the world as the founder of Prison Fellowship Ministries. Colson's first book, *Born Again*, tells the dramatic story of his conversion after being sentenced to prison for his role in the Watergate scandal during Richard Nixon's administration. As a brand-new Christian facing prison, Colson was ministered to by Senator Harold Hughes, a believer who offered to serve Colson's sentence if the judge would let him go. The judge refused, but Colson was deeply impacted by the example of servant leadership he saw in Hughes.

The terms servant and leader are opposites in the world's lexicon. Charles Colson had never seen loving sacrifice during his years in the inner circles of political power. Maybe that's because the concept of servant leadership did not originate on earth. It came straight from heaven in the person of Jesus the Messiah, who "did not come to be served, but to serve" (Mk. 10:45).

Earlier we talked about the way Old Testament prophets sometimes spoke of Messiah's first and second comings in the same breath, since they did not always see the gap between these two events. Isaiah 42 is another example of this. It's the first of what are often called the prophet's "Servant Songs." These are passages that depict the life and ministry of the Messiah, God's holy servant, and they are incredibly rich. We'll look at each one over the next week.

We can see the traits of servant humility that characterized the Messiah during His life on earth. Jesus did not create an uproar or make a scene, so to speak. He restored the most broken of lives. He was the very fulfillment of God's covenant promises to Israel, and He brought light to the Gentiles.

And above all, Jesus came to be the servant of all. No wonder Matthew quoted from Isaiah 42 in referring to the Lord (Matt. 12:18, 19, 20, 21).

But Isaiah also mentioned an important element of Christ's second coming--the establishment of universal justice. The Messiah came the first time as the unassuming servant. He will return, however, as the King of Kings who will reward His own servants for their faithfulness.

### **TODAY ALONG THE WAY**

It's interesting that the symbol for Prison Fellowship is the bruised reed of Isaiah 42:3, which is the ministry's theme verse. This passage is a wonderful reminder that Jesus Christ can mend broken lives. All of us are broken to some degree. Where do you feel the weakest and most inadequate in your life and service for Christ? That's the place where He desires to show you His power. He can exchange your weakness for His strength today.

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### **Isaiah 42:1-2**

#### **TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL**

The late Vance Havner was one of the most popular Bible teachers and conference speakers in America for a number of decades. Known for his plain-spoken, no-nonsense style of teaching God's Word, Havner was equally as straightforward and unpretentious when it came to the epitaph he wanted on his headstone: ""Just a preacher.""

One of the greatest portions of the Bible begins in a similarly unpretentious way. Isaiah 42 begins with the phrase, ""Here is my servant""--a simple declaration, but one that carries with it infinite meaning.

Today's passage describes a Figure identified as the ""servant"" of the Lord. This is a Person so amazing, so anointed by God, and so righteous that only the Lord Jesus Christ could fit the description, as Christian interpreters have generally agreed.

At least four times in his prophetic book, Isaiah describes this One called the Lord's Servant. These passages, which include Isaiah 42:1-11; and Isa 52:13-53:12, have come to be known as the ""Servant Songs.""

The context surrounding the Servant Songs is Isaiah's message of comfort to Judah's exiles in Babylon (Isa 40-66, see Isa 40:1). Although Judah's exile and return would take place 150 years in the future, God prophesied the nation's coming judgment and return under a Gentile king (Isa. 41:25, 26, 27, 28, 29), later identified as Cyrus.

Ultimately, however, God's Servant is the one who will establish justice on earth. The two comings of Christ paint the picture of an unassuming Servant who brings justice. In His earthly ministry, Jesus was the meek Servant. At His Second Coming, however, He

will boldly bring righteousness to the world in His millennial kingdom.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY Any time we open God's Word, we are on holy ground. That sense of being in God's holy presence is intensified as we read about God's Servant and the great work He accomplished and will accomplish for us.

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### **Isaiah 42:1-7**

#### **Here is my servant ... my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him. Isaiah 42:1**

In 1832, a young German man and his wife arrived in Bristol, England, to pastor a small church. When two orphans were unexpectedly put into the church's care, a new ministry began. Although God sent more than seven million dollars to George Mueller's orphanage in the next sixty years, Mueller never lost sight of his role as God's servant.

He once wrote, "A servant of God has but one Master. It ill becomes the servant to seek to be rich, and great, and honored in that world where his Lord was poor, and mean, and despised."

In our study on the Holy Spirit, we've seen His work of breathing life into creation, leading God's people, and filling God's leaders with wisdom and power. We've also seen how He directed the prophets and gave them God's words. Today we see the essential link between God's Spirit and service to God.

The first part of today's reading (Isaiah 42:1-4) is one of four passages in Isaiah that are called the Servant Songs, because they anticipate the suffering of the Messiah. Immediately we see that the title Servant is one of honor, not belittlement. This is the One who is fully able to carry out His God-given ministry of justice because God's Spirit is upon Him.

Unlike the powerful foreign conquerors of Isaiah's day, God's Servant wouldn't come with loud shouts in the street, nor would He crush the oppressed or discourage the faint of heart (v. 3). Rather this Servant would faithfully administer God's justice, even to the ends of the earth.

The rest of today's passage shows how God will use His Servant to bring salvation to the Gentiles, a process described as opening the eyes of the (spiritually) blind and freeing the captives (of sin). These verses ultimately describe our Lord, upon whom the Spirit rested completely; He was willing to suffer beatings, tauntings, and the humiliation of death on the cross on our behalf.

APPLY THE WORD Throughout this week, read through three other Servant Songs: Isaiah 49:1-6; Isaiah 50:4-9; and Isaiah 52:13-53:12. As you read, ask the Holy Spirit to show how much Jesus was willing to suffer for us. Meditate on how the Spirit equipped and empowered Jesus as our Suffering Servant. If your Bible lists cross-references, find those New Testament passages that show how Christ fulfilled these sections of Isaiah. You can also consult a Bible dictionary or handbook for these references.

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### **Isaiah 42:3-4**

#### **TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL**

Earlier this year, former prisoner of war Pete Peterson was appointed as the first U.S. ambassador to Vietnam since the war's end in 1975. Peterson spent six-and-a-half years undergoing torture and other mistreatment under the Vietnamese communists, yet he was willing to return to the place where he had suffered so much.

Pete Peterson's return to Vietnam in his official capacity is another reminder of the many P.O.W.s from that war who, although weak and oppressed, were not completely broken by their experience.

Isaiah's first Servant Song addresses the weak and oppressed through the image of a "bruised reed" and a "smoldering wick" (Isa 42:3). These metaphors describe people who are near to being crushed and extinguished --but they are still people for whom there is hope of restoration. Such hope can only be found in the Lord's Servant.

Today's verses continue to describe Jesus Christ's earthly ministry and triumphant reign in His coming millennial kingdom. We know that Jesus had compassion on those who were "harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Mt. 9:36). The bruised, the broken, and the downtrodden who reached out to Jesus found a gentle Shepherd.

Another side of Jesus' character, His righteousness and justice, will be the distinguishing mark of His Second Coming and millennial rule. As we noted yesterday, only the Son of God can bring universal justice to the earth. Even the most distant lands, "the islands" (Isa 42:4), will rejoice in His law.

Isaiah 42:4 also contains two interesting word plays in the Hebrew language. The Servant is said not to "falter," a word that means to dim or fade, like a smoldering wick. And the Servant will not "be discouraged"--literally, be crushed or bruised, an obvious

reflection of the bruised reed. There is a strength in the Servant that allows Him to help the broken.

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Do you ever feel bruised by life's bumps? Has your light ever flickered and almost gone out? If you answered yes, welcome to the human race! Experiences in which we feel weak and helpless are universal, but they are not all bad. It's in our weaknesses that we discover God's power (2Cor. 12:10).

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#### **Isaiah 42:5-7**

##### TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

In China, an advocate of democracy has called on the government to reverse its condemnation of the 1989 democracy protests in Beijing's Tiananmen Square and release those still in jail.

Leng Wanbao was himself put in prison in 1989 for leading demonstrations in support of the students, where he then spent time in solitary confinement. He was released in 1994 and has continued to be active on behalf of Chinese dissidents. Human rights observers believe that Mr. Leng's recent appeal will lead to his re-arrest.

We can admire this man's courageous attempt to free prisoners sitting in dark cells, however unlikely his chance of success. But when the Servant of the Lord purposes to open prison doors and release those held captive by sin and fear, no power on earth can thwart Him.

This is the assurance God Himself gives the Servant in the verses we are studying today. In a sense, we are privileged to be in on a conversation between the almighty creator God and His Servant, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our real privilege, of course, is that we are the direct beneficiaries of what God promises the Servant.

The assurance is this: because God has called the Servant to fulfill His righteous will, the Servant will complete His ministry both to Israel and to the Gentiles.

Jesus' ministry to Israel is ""to be a covenant for the people"" (Isa 42:6)--that is, to fulfill God's covenant promise of a Redeemer, the Messiah, who would live a righteous life and take away the sins of His people.

Jesus is the fulfillment of this calling down to the very letter of the Law (Mt 5:17, 18note). And when He came to earth, He also brought light and salvation to the Gentiles, setting free those held in sin's bondage (Isa. 42:7).

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

We talk a lot about the benefits of salvation. One reason is that they are so incredible, it will take us all eternity to realize what Jesus did for us. Another reason is that the benefits begin in the here-and-now, not just in the sweet-by-and-by. That means no matter where you are or what you're facing today, your salvation holds a very real blessing for you.

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#### **Isaiah 42:1-9 ; Matthew 12:1-21**

The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. - Matthew 20:28

##### TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

Many early American folk songs describe what life is like when you are poor--and in the case of spirituals, when you are a slave. As one spiritual puts it, "Nobody knows the trouble I've seen, Nobody knows but Jesus." These songs give us a sense of despair of those conditions.

Isaiah 42 is one of the Servant Songs of Isaiah, named so because here God describes someone who is His Servant and pleases Him (Isa 42:1). As we think about the birth of our Lord, we can learn much from this passage about His coming to earth.

First, how do we know who this Servant is in Isaiah 42? We find the answer in Matthew 12. The Pharisees were plotting to kill Jesus, so He left that place and continued to heal the sick. Then Matthew quotes Isaiah 42:1, 2, 3, 4 to confirm that Jesus is indeed the Servant in whom God delights.

Second, don't you find it striking that the Son of God, the Lord of the universe, would choose to be described as a Servant? As we ponder our response to the birth of Christ, it's appropriate to remember that we should have the same attitude and willingness to be a servant (cf. Phil. 2:5, 6-note, Php 2:7-note;Php 2:8-note).

Isaiah 42 describes Jesus as both gentle and just. The word justice is mentioned three times in four verses. Although the perfectly

just rule of Christ over all the earth is still to come, we can and should value and promote justice as His followers. And we can have confidence that He will one day return to rule with perfect, faithful justice (Isa. 42:4).

The Lord of justice is also our gentle Savior who promises to be patient with the downtrodden--"the bruised reeds" (Isa 42:3). Our culture promotes survival of the fittest, instructing us to "Clear out the dead weight!" and "Step or be stepped on!" But Jesus gently cares for us when we are desperately hurting, when we are like candles struggling to stay lit.

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

God calls Jesus "My chosen one in whom I delight" (v. 1). What a special honor that is! Wouldn't we, too, like to hear God say that of us?

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#### Isaiah 42:8-9

#### TODAY IN THE WORD DEVOTIONAL

The government of the Netherlands has decreed an unusual plan to promote the music of its native composers. Unfortunately, while the Dutch are well-known in the world of painting, Dutch composers ""pretty much wallow in obscurity,"" according to one report. So the government has ordered its national orchestras to play at least seven percent Dutch music in future concerts.

Aren't you glad that our great God needs no promotion plan or any other help to make His name known? One fact we are reminded of in Isaiah's initial Servant Song is that God alone has the power and authority to do everything He wills to do. Because of who God is, it is impossible for any other so-called god to share His glory (Isa 42:8).

God's power is so great, in fact, that He can reveal what He intends to do far in advance of its fulfillment. These final two verses of this Song are a further word of assurance to the Servant--and to us--that God will accomplish all He has said.

Remembering the context of the Servant Songs helps us understand why God raises the issue of idols here (see Sept. 1). In Isaiah 41:21, 22, 23, God challenges the false gods of other nations to do what He can do: foretell the future and then make the predictions come to pass.

That challenge will always go unanswered, because there is no god like the one true God. In today's verses, God is still addressing His Servant, assuring Him that His prophecies in verses 6-7 will take place. We considered that prophecy yesterday in light of the fulfillment and salvation Jesus brought at His first coming.

But for the Jews to whom Isaiah was writing, the prophecy of a release from captivity was directly related to the Babylonian captivity that lay ahead. Although His people would go into captivity, God would set them free. He was announcing this many years before it happened.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY If God can foretell and fulfill the futures of people and of nations, is anything too hard for Him (Gen. 18:14)? We know the answer to that! Here's an exercise you can do today to bring that truth home. Jot down the biggest concern or challenge you are currently facing--or maybe the top two or three.

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#### Behold My Servant.—Isa. 42.1

That is the proclamation. All that follows is in interpretation of that call to behold. The more complete unveiling of this Servant of Jehovah is reserved for the next division (Isa 49-57). Here we have: (a) a wonderful portrait of this coming One (Isa 42:1-9); (b) a great song in celebration of the triumph of Jehovah through Him (Isa 42:10-17); and (c) an appeal to Israel based upon the facts revealed (Isa 42:18-25). It is good at this point to stay to face the old and debated question as to Who this Servant of Jehovah is. That the reference was to Cyrus is so palpably absurd a suggestion that we need not stay to argue it. That it referred to Israel as she then was, is equally impossible to believe. That it referred to a spiritual element within Israel then existing is a suggestion which breaks down, in that such an elect remnant, which undoubtedly did exist, did not accomplish what is attributed to this Servant of Jehovah. To say that it is ideal Israel, is to say that no part of the forth tellings has yet been fulfilled, for the simple reason that such an ideal Israel is still non-existent. There can be only one interpretation which satisfies the reason, to say nothing of the heart; and that is that Matthew was right when he deliberately declared that this foretelling found its fulfillment in JESUS (see Matthew 12:15-21). As against that, it has been argued: "The Servant is invariably spoken of as having a present existence." And why not? It is certain that our Lord and Master, the Son of God, Who became His Servant for redemptive purposes, had then a present existence. To suggest that this prophet could have had no appreciation of the fact is to lower the conception of the Divine nature of the prophetic word. When Jehovah calls men to keep silence before Him, it is always in order that He may say to them, "Behold My Servant"; and there is only One Who can be so described. - G Campbell Morgan



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## Isaiah 42:3 Broken and Smoking

“A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench.”—Isaiah 42:3

THEN I may reckon upon tender treatment from my Lord. Indeed, I feel myself to be at best as weak, as pliant, as worthless as a reed. Someone said, “I don’t care a rush for you,” and the speech, though unkind, was not untrue. Alas! I am worse than a reed when it grows by the river, for that at least can hold up its head. I am bruised, sorely, sadly bruised. There is no music in me now; there is a rift which lets out all the melody. Ah, me! Yet Jesus will not break me; and if he will not, then I mind little what others try to do. O sweet and compassionate Lord, I nestle down beneath thy protection and forget my bruises!

Truly I am also fit to be likened to “the smoking flax,” whose light is gone, and only its smoke remains. I fear I am rather a nuisance than a benefit. My fears tell me that the devil has blown out my light and left me an obnoxious smoke, and that my Lord will soon put an extinguisher upon me. Yet I perceive that though there were snuffers under the law, there were no extinguishers; and Jesus will not quench me; therefore, I am hopeful. Lord, kindle me anew and cause me to shine forth to thy glory, and to the extolling of thy tenderness. - Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook

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## Isaiah 42:3 - Smoking flax

‘The smoking flax shall he not quench.’ Isaiah 42:3

A dear sister came in after service this morning, and told me that she was fifty years old on the same day as myself [19 June 1884], so she came to shake hands with me; she added, ‘I am like you in that, but I am the very reverse of you in other things.’ I replied, ‘Then you must be a good woman.’ ‘No,’ she said, ‘that is not what I mean.’ ‘But are you not a believer?’ ‘Well,’ she said, ‘I—I will try to be.’ I got hold of her hand, and I said, ‘You are not going to tell me that you will try and believe my Lord Jesus Christ, for that means unbelief of him who must be true;’ and I held her fast while I added, ‘When your mother was about, did you say to her, “Mother, I will try and believe you”? No, you would believe her because she was true; and I must have you believe Jesus Christ.’ She said, ‘Sir, do pray for me.’ ‘No,’ I said, ‘I am not inclined to do that. What should I pray for you about? If you will not believe my Lord, what blessing can he give you? What has he ever done that you should say, “I cannot believe him”?’ She again answered, ‘I will try.’ I was not content till I had reminded her of the word, ‘He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life’, and I pressed her to a full faith in the risen Lord. The Holy Spirit enabled her to trust, and then she cried, ‘I have been looking to my feelings, sir, and this has been my mistake.’ I have no doubt that she had done so, and a great many others are doing the same; their doubts are just that horrible smoke which comes from smoking flax. O, poor doubters, believe the Lord Jesus Christ! To say, ‘I cannot believe him,’ is to say in other words that he is a liar, and we cannot allow you to say that. (365 Days with Spurgeon)

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## Isaiah 42:4 Christ’s work no failure

‘He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.’ Isaiah 42:4

Our Lord has come to save his own elect and he will save every one of them. No soul for whom he stood as surety and substitute shall ever be cast away. The sheep shall pass again under the hand of him that counts them, and they shall all be there. ‘He shall not fail nor be discouraged,’ but ‘He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied’. As for the Lord’s second coming, we know not when it shall be. Shall the world grow darker and darker till he comes? It may be so. There are passages of Scripture and signs of the times which may be taken to indicate it. On the other hand, shall the age grow brighter and brighter till he appears to bring the perfect day? Through the preaching of the gospel shall there yet be periods in which multitudes shall be converted and whole nations shall be saved? I do not know: there are texts that seem to look that way, and many a brave worker hopes as much. There are brethren who can map out unfulfilled prophecy with great distinctness, but I confess my inability to do so. They get a box of mathematical instruments. They stick down one leg of the compasses and describe a circle here and a circle there, and they draw two or three lines, and there it is. Can you not see it, as plain as a pikestaff? I am sick of diagrams; I have seen enough of them to make another volume of Euclid. My impression is that very little is to be learned from the major part of these interpretations or speculations. I do not think that anybody can map out the future so as to be absolutely sure of anything definite except certain great clearly-stated facts. It is certain that the Lord will come, that he will come in such an hour as the most of men look not for him, and that his coming will be a surprise even to many of his own church. (365 Days with Spurgeon)

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## Isaiah 42:7 Victor Emmanuel, emancipator

‘To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.’ Isaiah 42:7 Habits of sin, like iron nets, surround the sinner, and he cannot escape their meshes. He imagines that he cannot help sinning. How often do the ungodly tell us that they cannot renounce the world, break off their sins by righteousness or believe in Jesus? Let all know that the Saviour has come to remove every bond of sin from the captive and to set him free from every chain of evil. I have known men strive against blasphemy, others against unchaste passions, and many more against a haughty spirit or an angry

temper; when they have striven manfully but unsuccessfully in their own strength, they have been filled with bitter chagrin that they should have been so betrayed by themselves. When a man believes in Jesus his resolve to become a freeman is to a great extent accomplished at once. Some sins die the moment we believe in Jesus, and trouble us no more; others hang on to us and die by slow degrees, but they are overcome so as never again to get the mastery over us. O struggler after mental, moral, spiritual liberty, if you would be free, your only possible freedom is in Christ. If you would shake off evil habits or any other mental bondage, commit yourself to Christ the Liberator. Love him and you will hate sin. Trust him and you will no more trust yourself. Submit yourself to the sway of the incarnate God, and he will break the dragon's head within you and hurl Satan beneath your feet. Nothing else can do it. Christ must have the glory of your conquest of self. He can set you free from sin's iron yoke. He never failed yet. I earnestly entreat any man who desires to break off his sins (and we must break them off or perish by them) to try this divine remedy. (365 Days with Spurgeon)

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### **Isaiah 42:16 The blind befriended**

'I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not: I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.' Isaiah 42:16

When a blind man knows the way, he can almost go without the guide. Many of our friends afflicted with the loss of sight find their way day by day along the accustomed road; there have been some that have been so expert, though blind, that they could go over fifty miles of country, or thread their way in town up and down the streets of a milkman's walk, serving at each customer's house without ever making a mistake. They have often acted as guides to others; but, then, it has always been along a way that they have known. There is many a blind sinner who could guide others in the ways that he knows. He could guide others in the way of the drunkard, the licentious, or the swearer. He knows that way very well. He could guide young people into the way of infidelity, putting a thousand horrible thoughts into their minds. But when the Lord takes such a man as that in hand, he does not lead him that way, but in a way that he never went before. I remember being led by the divine hand down the dark lane of repentance with many a sigh and many a groan. I remember being led into the more pleasant way of faith by the same divine hand, and brought to the Saviour's feet; since then I have not known the way and have not expected to know it; for the way of grace that lies before us may be described as the Lord described the way of Israel in the wilderness: 'ye have not passed this way heretofore.' It is a new way, and when God undertakes to be our guide it is all new. Is it not written, 'Behold, I make all things new'? I hope that many of us know what it is to be led in a way we have not known. (365 Days with Spurgeon)

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### **Isaiah 42:16 A Sure Guide**

"I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not." —Isaiah 42:16

THINK of the infinitely glorious Jehovah acting as a Guide to the blind! What boundless condescension does this imply! A blind man cannot find a way which he does not know. Even when he knows the road, it is hard for him to traverse it; but a road which he has not known is quite out of the question for his unguided feet. Now, we are by nature blind as to the way of salvation; and yet the Lord leads us into it, brings us to Himself, and then opens our eyes. As to the future, we are all of us blind, and cannot see an hour before us; but the Lord Jesus will lead us even to our journey's end. Blessed be His name!

We cannot guess in which way deliverance can possibly come to us, but the Lord knows, and He will lead us till we shall have escaped every danger. Happy are those who place their hand in that of the Great Guide and leave their way and themselves entirely with Him. He will bring them all the way; and when He has brought them home to glory and has opened their eyes to see the way by which He has led them, what a song of gratitude will they sing unto their great Benefactor! Lord, lead thy poor blind child this day, for I know not my way! - Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook

## **ISAIAH 43**

### **Isaiah 43:1–2 Now thus saith the Lord.**

Who is He that saith? — He that created thee in the womb of time; that has molded and formed thee in all the varying providences of life; that redeemed thee by his most precious blood; that knows and calls thee by thy name. When Prince Albert died, the Queen cried, in the agony of her grief, "There will be no one now to call me Victoria." Ah, but there is always One who will call his own by name. Simon, Simon!

What doth He prognosticate? — He foretells that there will be fire through which the ore of character must be passed, and waters which the pilgrim host must traverse. This is inevitable. He is too transparently truthful to engage us without telling the nature of his service. Through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom.

The path of sorrow, and that path alone,

Leads to the world where sorrow is unknown,”

What doth He promise? — In all our lot, God is willing to be our partner and companion. He has called us into fellowship with his Son, and in his faithfulness He will see us through. The waters rise, the night is dark, the ford is hard to find, and footing is insecure; but He is at hand, steadying the feet, and keeping the head above the floods. The fiery furnace is heated sevenfold, so that the strongest soldiers in the armies of the world are consumed by its flame; but one like the Son of Man walks by his faithful witnesses, and makes the burning embers more delightful than the dewy sward of Paradise. The bonds will be burnt, and the captive limbs set free; but no hair of the head shall perish, nor the smell of fire pass on thee. - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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### **Isaiah 43:1, 22; 44:21 Love abounding, love complaining, love abiding**

‘But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.’ ‘But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.’ ‘Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant ... thou shalt not be forgotten of me.’ Isaiah 43:1, 22; 44:21

‘Thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.’ The Lord has delighted in us, for he joyously recounts his dealings towards us, saying, ‘I have created thee and formed thee. I have redeemed thee, and called thee, and made thee mine.’ If he had been weary of us we need not have wondered, but we ought to blush and be silent for shame, because we have wearied of him. Brothers, are we tired of our God? If not, how is it that we do not walk with him from day to day? Really spiritual worship is not much cared for in these days, even by professing Christians. Many will go to a place of worship if they can be entertained with fine music or grand oratory, but if communion with God is the only attraction, they are not drawn thereby. They can spend many an evening where all sorts of levity and nonsense waste the hour, but when do they spend an evening with their God? If some of you had ever done such a thing, it would be marked down in your diaries as a wonder. Can any of you say, ‘I did once spend a night with God’? Is it not, then, true, ‘thou hast been weary of me’? Some of my hearers have never spoken with God in all their lives: they are not on speaking terms with him; they do not know him. Small wonder is it that you do not believe in him: he alone truly believes in God who has come to know him. He that lives with God and walks with God has no questions or doubts about his existence: he has risen long ago above that wretched state of mind. God grant that any of you who are weary at the very mention of eternal things may be delivered from your earth-bondage and made to rejoice in the Lord. - 365 Days with Spurgeon

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### **Isaiah 43:2 Through, Not Engulfed**

“When thou passest through the waters, I will bewith thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”—Isaiah 43:2

BRIDGE there is none: we must go through the waters, and feel the rush of the rivers. The presence of God in the flood is better than a ferry boat. Tried we must be, but triumphant we shall be; for Jehovah Himself, who is mightier than many waters, shall be with us. Whenever else He may be away from His people, the Lord will surely be with them in difficulties and dangers. The sorrows of life may rise to an extraordinary height, but the Lord is equal to every occasion.

The enemies of God can put in our way dangers of their own making—namely, persecutions and cruel mockings, which are like a burning fiery furnace. What then? We shall walk through the fires. God being with us, we shall not be burned; nay, not even the smell of fire shall remain upon us.

Oh, the wonderful security of the heaven-born and heaven-bound pilgrim! Floods cannot drown him, nor fires burn him. Thy presence, O Lord, is the protection of thy saints from the varied perils of the road. Behold, in faith I commit myself unto thee, and my spirit enters into rest. - Spurgeon in Faith's Checkbook

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### **C H SPURGEON Spurgeon's Expositions often have a devotional flavor so be sure to check out what he writes on...**

[Isaiah 43](#)

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Isaiah 43:2 “Where is Jesus of Nazareth, my old and faithful friend?” asked Jonathan Edwards, dying, “I know He will be with me.” And he died triumphant. - D L Moody

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### **Isaiah 43:7. I have created him for my glory.**

God made you for an end. Find out what that end is; find out your niche, and fill it. If it be ever so little, if it is only to be a hewer of wood and drawer of water, do something in this great battle for God and truth. SPURGEON.

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**Isaiah 43:21. This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.**

I have read of an author, who, whilst he was writing a book he was about to publish, would every now and then look back to the title to see if his work corresponded thereto, and if it answered the expectation raised thereby. Now, the use I would make hereof, and would recommend to you, is for thee, O sinner, to look back every now and then, and consider for what thou wast created; and for thee, O saint, to look back every now and then, and consider for what thou wast redeemed. ASHBURNER.

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**Isaiah 43:1 YOU ARE MINE.**

Concerning spiritual and earthly things, to whom could we go but to Him who has been so good to us? Who else can supply our needs but Jehovah? Who can hold us up but God? Who can guide us but God? Who can keep us from falling into ruin but God? Who can, on an hour by hour basis, supply our desperate needs but God?

Our imaginations could not have conceived greater wealth than is ours in the covenant of grace. All things are ours, the gift of God. God being ours, the Infinite is ours, the Omniscient is ours, and the Omnipotent is ours. What a boundless, unailing portion that always comes in due season.

Have you ever rested on Him and found Him to fail? Did you ever trust Him in vain? Are His promises false? Has He ever left you in deep waters? When you passed through the fire, did the flames burn you? Have you found your God to be a wilderness? Has He failed in the day of your difficulty?

“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you. For I am the LORD your God” (Is. 43:1–3).

Beloved, our God has blessed and continues to bless, not by fits and starts but by a constant grace. He is a faithful friend. We are well supplied by our King.

**Isaiah 43:2 I WILL BE WITH YOU.**

Jesus Christ is with you in every pang that rips your heart and in every pain that tears your body. Do you feel the sorrows of poverty? Jesus said, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head” (Matt. 8:20). Are you sorrowing? “Jesus wept” at Lazarus’ tomb (John 11:35). Have you been slandered and hurt? He said, “Reproach has broken My heart, and I am full of heaviness” (Ps. 69:20). Have you been betrayed? Remember, He had a friend who sold Him for the price of a slave (Matt. 26:15).

Every stormy sea that has tossed you has roared around His boat too. There is no adversity so dark, so deep, or so apparently pathless that you cannot discover the Crucified One’s footsteps when you kneel. In the fires, in the rivers, in the cold night, and under the burning sun He cries:

Fear not I am with you, O be not dismayed,  
For I am your God, I will still give you aid:  
I’ll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand,  
Upheld by My gracious, omnipotent hand.  
When through the deep waters I call you to go,  
The rivers of sorrow will not overflow,  
For I will be with you, your trials to bless,  
And sanctify to you your deepest distress.  
When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie,  
My grace all-sufficient shall be your supply  
The flames shall not hurt you, I only design  
Your dross to consume and your gold to refine.

**Isaiah 43:2 FREE FROM THE FLOOD.**

In losses, crosses, and troubles, you realize God’s presence more conspicuously than ever. The Bible does not say that when you walk along the flowery path or rest on the soft green bank, “I will be with you.” It does not say that when you walk on the close cut grass, which feels like a carpet under your feet, “I will be with you.” I do not remember reading a Scripture promise like that. But God does say, “When you pass through the waters I will be with you” (Is. 43:2). He gives a special promise for a special time of trial. To meet the doubts of His troubled child, He says, “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine” (Is. 43:1).

Our way to heaven lies through the flood, and through the flood we will go. God has ordained that no trouble, however great, and no persecution, however terrible, will stop the onward march of a soul predestined to eternal joy.

Suppose the river is deep and rapid and the torrent sweeps everything before it, still we shall go through it. We shall not be stopped

or swept away because God has promised, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you (Is. 43:2).

### **Isaiah 43:2 FREE FROM THE FIRE.**

Believer, you will pass through the fire. But the Lord says that "when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you" (Is. 43:2). This verse implies that your march through the flames will be quiet, calm, and safe. There is no need to increase your usual pace. If I had to go through literal fire, I would want to run and leap, but spiritually we are to walk through the fire. There is a beautiful passage in the Psalter, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil" (Ps. 23:4). Walking is our pace, "whoever believes will not act hastily" (Is. 28:16) but will walk even through the fire.

What a blessing that "in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:37–39). Therefore, no trouble or trial can prevent our progress toward heaven. Through divine grace we will walk through the fire. - C H Spurgeon "Beside Still Waters"

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### **Isaiah 43:1-7; Isaiah 43:1-44:5**

#### **When you pass through the waters, I will be with you. Isaiah 43:2**

On November 10, 1941, Dr. Ludwig Fischer (the German district governor of Warsaw, Poland) issued a proclamation declaring that anyone who gave any assistance to Jews—including lodging, food, or transportation—would be punished by death. Despite this decree, some people still assisted Jews in escaping from the horrendous Warsaw Ghetto and the deportation to death camps like Auschwitz. The Yad Vashem museum in Jerusalem honors some 5,000 Poles as "righteous Gentiles" for risking their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust.

Our God also chooses to save. All we sinners were condemned to die as surely as the Jews during the war and those who assisted them, until God decided to redeem us. Today's passage focuses on what it means to be chosen for saving mercy, what it means to be the people of God and to belong to Him. For starters, this is not a relationship between equals. He's the Creator, we're the creatures. All the rights lie on His side. Israel had no right to "talk back." Rather, they were to be a revelation and evidence of His Godhood (Isaiah 43:12). If they'd forgotten the covenant, they could look back to the Exodus and the mighty way God had delivered them from slavery in Egypt.

Another feature of God's relationship with Israel is His unconditional love. He's the One who called, redeemed, and promised to be with them always. He remained faithful and merciful despite their idolatry. Though He was about to send punishment, He vowed to protect them from complete destruction. Even more, He would later judge the Babylonians. Although the Israelites of Isaiah's day didn't worship or honor the Lord, or believe and respond to His prophet's message, still He promised the salvation of a remnant and justice on their enemies. His forgiveness has its own purposes (Isaiah 43:25), and His love is the true glory of chosenness (Isaiah 44:5).

#### **APPLY THE WORD**

As believers, we rejoice that God chose to save us. Without His mercy and grace, we'd still be on our way to an eternity without Him. Yet our justification in Christ is just the first step in His plan of salvation. Day by day, we need to resist temptation and confess our sin when we fall—this is part of the ongoing process of sanctification. Not confessing our sin creates barriers between us and God. Confession, on the other hand, results in His cleansing and forgiveness (Isaiah 43:25; 1 John 1:9)!

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But now —Isa. 43.1

I have stressed these two words because they constitute a distinct and intended link between the Manifesto of Jehovah, of which the central proclamation is "Behold, My Servant," and a series of messages dependent upon that proclamation. These messages are found in this and the next two chapters, each one beginning with the formula, "Thus saith Jehovah." They constitute one great whole of interpretation of matters resulting from the fact that Jehovah has chosen, and anointed His Servant. In this chapter there are four such messages. Their content may thus be summarized. The first one (Isa 43:1-9) affirms God's relation to Israel as Creator and Redeemer, and declares that He will yet gather them to Himself. The second (Isa 43:10-13) declares that they will fulfil their function of being His witnesses, because of what He is, and what He will accomplish. The third (Isa 43:14-15) promises the destruction of Babylon, the opposing force, because He is Redeemer, Creator, King. The fourth (Isa 43:16-28), referring to the past deliverances wrought, promises a new thing; and appeals to Israel, as unfaithful, promises pardon, and declares the method of punishment as necessary. All this is linked up with the revelation of the Servant by these words, "But now." Not yet in the prophecy is that Servant revealed, either in Himself, His method, or His victory. That will come presently. But the fact of His choice and

appointment by God is declared; and these are some of the results. If we are true to the simplest intention of this great Hebrew writing we must interpret these predictions as having to do with Israel. In that case we realize that none of them is literally fulfilled as yet. Babylon as she then existed has been broken; but Babylon as the spiritual force antagonistic to Israel, is yet in power. But every prediction will be fulfilled to the letter. For us, the word of prophecy has been made more sure, because we have seen this Servant of Jehovah. - G Campbell Morgan

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#### **Isaiah 43:2 Fire! Fire! Fire!**

‘When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.’ Isaiah 43:2

Through much tribulation we must inherit the kingdom. Think it no strange thing when the fiery trial shall happen to you. If you have the common afflictions of the world do not wonder. You must have them. The same thing happens both to the evil and to the good. You lose in business, you have reverses and disappointments; do not stagger at these on the way to heaven. You must have these; they are necessary to your spiritual health. Worse than that, you have strange temptations, you are placed in a position where you are constantly exposed to sin. It must be so. This too is the pathway of God’s people; you must have these fiery temptations, that you, being tried in the fire, may come forth as gold seven times purified. You have mental anxieties. Neither let these seem a wonder to you. They fall to the lot of all the saints of the Most High. Moreover, you will have to endure the attacks of Satan, you must go through the valley of the shadow of death, and fight with Apollyon as Christian did; you are not to be exempted from the hardness of Christian warfare. If you will mount the hill, you must climb; if you are to win the crown, you must win it by sheer might. Think not this a strange thing. And if in doing good you meet with difficulties, let that not stagger you. It is but right and natural. I tell you again, if there be any pathway in which there be not fire, tremble; but if your lot be hard, thank God for it. If your sufferings be great, bless the Lord for them; and if the difficulties in your pathway be many, surmount them by faith, but let them not cast you down. Be of good courage, and wait on the Lord, setting this constantly in your minds that he has not promised to keep you from trouble, but to preserve you in it. - 365 Days with Spurgeon

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#### **Isaiah 43:4 The value and rank of the believer**

‘Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.’ Isaiah 43:4

The child of God is too honourable to take what other people would take, if thereby he would stain his dignity. He may often feel it unbecoming his dignity to do that which is lawful; he may therefore choose a more excellent way. Lions will not be found stealing little bits of meat like cats, or feeding on carrion like dogs. It is not for eagles to hawk for flies and it is not for children of God to stoop below the glorious level of their new birth. ‘Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable’. Oh, you right honourables, take care to act honourably. My brethren, we do not wish to be called ‘reverend’, any one of us, but God has called us honourable, and it would be a fairer title by far for us to wear. Reverence, surely, we can never claim; that belongs but to one. But if he calls us ‘honourable’, I venture at least to call you ‘right honourable.’ O you right honourables, always live as right honourables. Do not let us hear of you that you spoke in a sulk, for that is to act like a spoiled child. One of God’s honourables in a passion, uttering burning words! This will never do. One of God’s children doubting God, afraid to trust his heavenly Father, and trying by little tricks of trade to get on, instead of being honest! Is this a conversation such as becomes the household of faith? Is not this the reverse of what becomes us? There is one that cannot forgive his brother: is that seemly? He will not speak to his friend because of some small offence; is that honourable? Some that profess to be God’s children seem to think it a poor business to be a Christian? Brethren, think not so. Have a high idea of what a Christian ought to be; and then pray the Spirit of God to raise you up to it. - 365 with Spurgeon

#### **Isaiah 43:4 Precious, honourable, beloved**

‘Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee.’ Isaiah 43:4

We can never think of the human soul but as a very precious and priceless thing. If that be the case, how honourable all men become as objects of our zeal! ‘Honour all men’ says the apostle Peter, a text I do not hear quoted half so often as that other, ‘Honour the king.’ Do not forget the second, but take equal care of the first. There is, because of its spiritual and immortal nature, a dignity about the soul of the meanest man, which no degree of poverty or degradation can altogether take away. The harlot in the streets, how few will care for her! But, tender hearts, as you look on the poor fallen one, say, ‘Since your soul was precious in my sight as an immortal spirit, you have been no longer despised and trampled on, but I have loved you as my Saviour loved you, and for his sake I esteem your soul as an honourable, priceless thing.’ Do not think of the thousands in prison today as though they were just so much filth to be got rid of. Do not think, above all, of the great mass of the needy and pauperised classes of society as though they were a mere encumbrance of the common welfare, the mere rubbish to be swept away and laid in heaps in the workhouse or on foreign shores. No, they are precious; as precious are their souls as yours. Think of them in that respect, and honour the immortal spark that is in them, the manhood that God has been pleased to create; honour that and, as you honour it, love it and prove your love by praying that God will save it, by using every instrument within your power to recover it from its ruin and to bring it back to the great God to whom it belongs. - 365 with Spurgeon

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### **Isaiah 43:6 Keep not back.”**

Although this message was sent to the south, and referred to the seed of Israel, it may profitably be a summons to ourselves. Backward we are naturally to all good things, and it is a lesson of grace to learn to go forward in the ways of God. Reader, are you unconverted, but do you desire to trust in the Lord Jesus? Then keep not back. Love invites you, the promises secure you success, the precious blood prepares the way. Let not sins or fears hinder you, but come to Jesus just as you are. Do you long to pray? Would you pour out your heart before the Lord? Keep not back. The mercy-seat is prepared for such as need mercy; a sinner's cries will prevail with God. You are invited, nay, you are commanded to pray, come therefore with boldness to the throne of grace.

Dear friend, are you already saved? Then keep not back from union with the Lord's people. Neglect not the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. You may be of a timid disposition, but you must strive against it, lest it lead you into disobedience. There is a sweet promise made to those who confess Christ—by no means miss it, lest you come under the condemnation of those who deny him. If you have talents keep not back from using them. Hoard not your wealth, waste not your time; let not your abilities rust or your influence be unused. Jesus kept not back, imitate him by being foremost in self-denials and self-sacrifices. Keep not back from close communion with God, from boldly appropriating covenant blessings, from advancing in the divine life, from prying into the precious mysteries of the love of Christ. Neither, beloved friend, be guilty of keeping others back by your coldness, harshness, or suspicions. For Jesus' sake go forward yourself, and encourage others to do the like. Hell and the leagued bands of superstition and infidelity are forward to the fight. O soldiers of the cross, keep not back. - Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

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### **Isaiah 43:6 North and south**

'I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back.' Isaiah 43:6

If there be a brother who could do more for Christ, let him 'Keep not back'. Could you preach? Well, there are plenty of places needing occasional ministry and others that are quite destitute. I do not know a nobler occupation for a man who is in business than for him to be maintaining himself by his shop or whatever else his calling may be, and going out to suburban villages on the Sabbath to preach. I often wonder why more do not imitate the example of some good brethren, who are diligent in their business and also fervent in spirit in their Master's work. What reason can there be that for every little church there should be a pastor specially set apart for the work? It is a very desirable thing wherever there are enough Christian people to be able to support the minister that there should be such; but I believe we very much hamper ourselves in our Christian work through always imagining that a paid person set apart to preach is necessary for every Christian church. There ought to be more farmers who educate themselves and preach in their own barns or on the village greens. There ought to be more men of business who seek to improve their minds, that they may preach acceptably anywhere the gospel of Jesus Christ; and I hope the time will come when members of churches will not be so backward but will come forward and speak to the honour of the Lord Jesus. If you cannot edify a thousand, perhaps you can influence ten; if you cannot with a regular congregation continue to find fresh matter year after year (and believe me that is a very difficult thing), yet you can preach a sermon here and a sermon there, and tell to different companies the same story of the Saviour's love. I do not know what special work you can do, but something is within your power, and from that 'Keep not back'. - 365 Days with Spurgeon

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### **Isaiah 43:6 - Do not withhold.**

Although this message was sent to the south and referred to the offspring of Israel, it may profitably be a summons to ourselves. We are naturally backward to all good things, and it is a lesson of grace to learn to go forward in the ways of God. Reader, are you unconverted, but do you desire to trust in the Lord Jesus? Then do not withhold. Love invites you; the promises assure you of success; the precious blood prepares the way. Do not let sin or fear hinder you, but come to Jesus just as you are. Do you long to pray? Would you like to pour out your heart before the Lord? Do not withhold. The mercy-seat is prepared for all who need mercy; a sinner's cries will prevail with God. You are invited—in fact, you are commanded—to pray; come therefore with boldness to the throne of grace.

Dear friend, are you already saved? Then do not withhold from union with the Lord's people. Do not neglect the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. You may be of a timid disposition, but you must fight against it, for fear that it will lead you into disobedience. There is a sweet promise made to those who confess Christ—do not miss it, in case you should come under the condemnation of those who deny Him. If you have talents, do not withhold from using them. Do not hoard your wealth; do not waste your time; do not let your abilities rust or your influence be unfelt. Jesus did not withhold; imitate Him by being head of the line in self-denials and self-sacrifices. Do not withhold from close communion with God, from boldly appropriating covenant blessings, from advancing in the divine life, from searching out the precious mysteries of the love of Christ. Do not, beloved friend, be guilty of keeping others back by your coldness, harshness, or suspicions. For Jesus' sake go forward yourself, and encourage others to do the same. Hell and the united bands of superstition and infidelity are ready for the fight. Soldiers of the cross, do not withhold! - Spurgeon Morning and Evening

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### **Isaiah 43:10 God's witnesses**

'Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant, whom I have chosen.' Isaiah 43:10

Some of you have not much to spare when the rent is paid and food is bought, yet with all that, you want no man's pity, for you are rich to all the intents of bliss. When Mr Hone, who wrote the 'Every-day Book,' was travelling through Wales—he was an infidel—he stopped at a cottage to ask for a drink of water, when a little girl said, 'Oh yes, sir, I have no doubt mother will give you some milk. Come in.' He went in and sat down. The little girl was reading her Bible. Mr Hone said, 'Well, my little girl, are you getting your task?' 'No, sir, I am not,' she replied, 'I am reading the Bible.' 'Yes,' said he, 'you are getting your task out of the Bible?' 'Oh, no,' she replied, 'It is no task to read the Bible; I love the Bible.' 'And why do you love the Bible?' said he. Her simple, childlike answer was, 'I thought everybody loved the Bible.' She thought full sure it was the greatest treat in all the world, and fancied that everybody else was delighted to read God's Word. Mr Hone was so touched with the sincerity of that expression, that he read the Bible himself, and instead of being an opponent to the things of God, came to be a friend of divine truth. Let us in the same way show to the people of the world who think our religion to be slavery, that it is a delight and a joy; that it is no more a burden to us to pray than it is for the fish to swim; that it is no more bondage for us to serve God than for a bird to fly. True godliness is our natural element now that we have a new nature given us by the Spirit of God. On that matter be witnesses for God. - 365 Days with Spurgeon

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#### **Isaiah 43:24 "Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money."**

Worshippers at the temple were wont to bring presents of sweet perfumes to be burned upon the altar of God: but Israel, in the time of her backsliding, became ungenerous, and made but few votive offerings to her Lord: this was an evidence of coldness of heart towards God and his house. Reader, does this never occur with you? Might not the complaint of the text be occasionally, if not frequently, brought against you? Those who are poor in pocket, if rich in faith, will be accepted none the less because their gifts are small; but, poor reader, do you give in fair proportion to the Lord, or is the widow's mite kept back from the sacred treasury? The rich believer should be thankful for the talent entrusted to him, but should not forget his large responsibility, for where much is given much will be required; but, rich reader, are you mindful of your obligations, and rendering to the Lord according to the benefit received? Jesus gave his blood for us, what shall we give to him? We are his, and all that we have, for he has purchased us unto himself—can we act as if we were our own? O for more consecration! and to this end, O for more love! Blessed Jesus, how good it is of thee to accept our sweet cane bought with money! nothing is too costly as a tribute to thine unrivalled love, and yet thou dost receive with favour the smallest sincere token of affection! Thou dost receive our poor forget-me-nots and love-tokens as though they were intrinsically precious, though indeed they are but as the bunch of wild flowers which the child brings to its mother. Never may we grow niggardly towards thee, and from this hour never may we hear thee complain of us again for withholding the gifts of our love. We will give thee the first fruits of our increase, and pay thee tithes of all, and then we will confess "of thine own have we given thee." - 365 Days with Spurgeon

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#### **Isaiah 43:25 Forgiveness**

"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Isaiah 43:25

There are some passages of scripture which have been more abundantly blessed to the conversion of souls than others. They may be called salvation texts. We may not be able to discover how it is, or why it is, but certainly it is the fact, that some chosen verses have been more used of God to bring men to the cross of Christ than any others in his Word. Certainly they are not more inspired, but I suppose they are more noticeable from their position, from their peculiar phraseology more adapted to catch the eye of the reader, and more suitable to a prevailing spiritual condition. All the stars in the heavens shine very brightly, but only a few attract the eye of the mariner, and direct his course; the reason is this, that those few stars from their peculiar grouping are more readily distinguished, and the eye easily fixes upon them. So I suppose it is with those passages of God's Word which especially attract attention, and direct the sinner to the cross of Christ. It so happens that this text is one of the chief of them. I have found it, in my experience, to be a most useful one; for out of the hundreds of persons who have come to me to narrate their conversion and experience, I have found a very large proportion who have traced the divine change which has been wrought in their hearts to the hearing of this precious declaration of sovereign mercy read, and the application of it with power to their souls: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." - 365 Days with Spurgeon

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#### **Isaiah 43:25 God's non-remembrance of sin**

'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' Isaiah 43:25

We may not speak, except after the manner of men, of the Lord God as having memory; and yet how blessed it is that he should himself use the speech which is current among ourselves, and represent himself after the manner of a man, and then say, 'their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.' He wishes us to know that his pardon is so true and deep that it amounts to an absolute oblivion, a total forgetting of all the wrong-doing of the pardoned ones. You know what we do when we exercise memory. To speak popularly, a man lays up a thing in his mind: but when sin is forgiven it is not laid up in God's mind. A certain matter has happened, and we remember it, storing it away in our memory. We read that 'Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.' We make a kind of storeroom of our memory, and there things are preserved, like fruits in autumn, stored up to be used by and by. We reckon a man to be fortunate who has a good memory, so that he can lay by things in his brain where he can get at them in time of



need. The Lord will not do this with our sins. He will not store them in his archives: he will not give them house-room. The record of our sin shall not be laid up in the divine treasury: we shall not cry with Job, 'My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity.' As for the ungodly, their sins are written with an iron pen, and the measure of their iniquity is daily filling, till it be poured out upon their own head: their sins have gone before them to the judgment seat, and are crying aloud for vengeance. - 365 Days with Spurgeon

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### **Isaiah 43:26 - REMEMBRANCER—Lord's**

A HIGH office is that of remembrancer to the King of kings. Every Christian holds this eminent position. Oriental kings maintained an officer whose business it was to remind the king of those promises he had made aforetime. He said this to that courtier, that to the other; but his majesty had plenty of other things to think of, and therefore, every now and then, his remembrancer would say, "Please your majesty, you promised to do this and that, may it please you to perform your word." Now, the Lord has appointed His praying people to be His remembrancers. I should never have dared to use such an expression had I not found it in the inspired Word itself. The Lord says in Isaiah 43:26, "Put me in remembrance." The Lord cannot forget; but in condescension to our forgetfulness, He bids us act as if He could do so, and put Him in remembrance. By calling the promise to the Lord's remembrance, we are ourselves made to be the better acquainted with it. I find that a remembrancer was also appointed in our English courts, to remind the officers of their duty to their sovereign; and this is also a part of our work, to remind the world that there is a God, and that He claims obedience from His creatures. Brethren, fulfil your office. Spurgeon - Barbed Arrows

## **ISAIAH 44**

### **Isaiah 44:21 O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of Me.**

We think He has forgotten. We lie on our bed of pain, and He sends no chariot to fetch us home. We linger to extreme old age, and are lonely because all the companions of our youth have left our side, and it seems as though He had forgotten to send the ferry-boat across for his child. And the river-brink is cold. We toil all through the night against wind and wave, and it seems inexplicable that the Master tarries so long on the shore. We sit by our dead; and though we sent for Him four days ago, He has not come. We told Him that we had come to our last crust; but as yet no raven has brought us food.

When I was a very little boy, one stormy night, my father, who usually fetched me when the weather was bad, forgot to call for me, and it grew later and later; all the other boys had been sent to bed, and I heard them proposing to send me, and I had never slept outside my fathers house. I kept up as long as I could, and then my heart broke. It was only a momentary forgetting, however; for he came for me at last, through miles of storm — and love made amends. But not for a moment can God forget. He is never nearer than when He seems further. He has redeemed His blood awaits its holy ministry of blotting out sin. He has tied tip his heart with us. We are graven upon the palms of his hands.

The dying thief asked to be remembered. And Jesus said in effect: "Remember thee! How could I ever forget thee, who alone couldst speak sustaining words of love and trust in these sad hours? Remember thee! Dost thou ask only to be remembered? I tell thee, when the shadows fall around the holy city, and all these crowds have gone to their homes, thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."- F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily

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### **Isaiah 44:3 Are the Children In?**

"I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring."—Isaiah 44:3 OUR dear children have not the Spirit of God by nature as we plainly see. We see much in them which makes us fear as to their future, and this drives us to agonizing prayer. When a son becomes specially perverse, we cry with Abraham, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before thee!" We would sooner see our daughters Hannahs than empresses. This verse should greatly encourage us. It follows upon the words, "Fear not, O Jacob, my servant," and it may well banish our fears.

The Lord will give His Spirit; will give it plentifully, pouring it out; will give it effectually, so that it shall be a real and eternal blessing. Under this divine outpouring our children shall come forward and "one shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by His name of Jacob."

This is one of those promises concerning which the Lord will be inquired of. Should we not, at set times, in a distinct manner, pray for our offspring? We cannot give them new hearts, but the Holy Spirit can; and He is easily to be entreated of. The great Father takes pleasure in the prayers of fathers and mothers. Have we any dear ones outside of the ark? Let us not rest till they are shut in with us by the Lord's own hand. - Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook

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[Isaiah 44](#)

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**Isaiah 44:21. Thou shalt not be forgotten of me.**

He may leave you long without succor. He may allow you to toil against a tempestuous sea until the fourth watch of the night. He may seem silent and austere, tarrying two days still in the same place, as if careless of the dying Lazarus. He may allow your prayers to accumulate like unopened letters on the table of an absent friend. But at last He will say: "O man, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." F. B. MEYER.

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**Isaiah 44:1–28**

**This is what the Lord says—he who made you, who formed you...in the womb, and who will help you. Isaiah 44:2**

Abby Johnson joined Planned Parenthood because she believed that the organization was helping women at a critical time of need. The 29-year-old progressed to become a director of a local Texas chapter of the organization. But last year she was asked to assist in an ultra-sound and viewed first-hand an abortion. "I had never seen an abortion happen on an ultrasound," she said. Johnson said the experience changed her forever. "I just thought, 'What am I doing?'" she said. And then, she thought, "Never again." At the point she saw a living, breathing, heart-beating baby alive in the womb, Johnson was convinced that abortion was something she could no longer support.

Today's passage is an important one. Not only does it state that God knew and created us in the womb, but the chapter outlines His purpose for our lives. God says not only that He knew and created us, but also that He is eternal. "I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God (Isaiah 44:6). He asks, "Who then is like me?" The answer, of course, is no one.

God is eternal and all-powerful. He is the Creator. We are His creation. That gives us a value, a worth that cannot be denied. We are purposefully made, purposefully created. He reminds us in Isaiah 44:21: "Remember these things ... I have made you, you are my servant; O Israel, I will not forget you."

We are made by the God who does not make mistakes. He knows us. He has promised not to forget us. This gives us reason to rejoice. Isaiah 44:23 articulates this joy: "Sing for joy, O heavens, for the Lord has done this." Isaiah 44:24 directs this joy toward the Creator, "the Lord who has made all things."

When we look for our purpose, it is helpful to remember that God is our personal Creator. He has signed His name to our life. He designed us the way we are. And He has the power to carry us to the end of our lives (Isaiah 44:25–28).

APPLY THE WORD A work of art is more valuable when it is signed. The signature of the artist helps to protect against forgery or misidentification. As a child of the Creator of the universe, you need not live as a forgery, or think you are unworthy of the blessings of the Lord. Spend time today thanking God for His signature upon your life. If you are tempted to relegate yourself to a dustbin of uselessness, pray through the verses in today's reading again and praise the God who made you, who loves you, and has declared your value.

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**Isaiah 44:6-8; Isaiah 44:6-46:13**

**I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God. Isaiah 44:6**

Stradivarius violins are known as the best violins in the world. Famous musicians love to play them. These violins can be strong and powerful, soft and expressive, energetic and brilliant. Said one performer: "It's like a great race car. There's more power than you need and it responds to the slightest touch." Antonio Stradivari was a master artisan who lived in northern Italy about 300 years ago. Many people have tried to imitate his unique way of crafting stringed instruments, but none have succeeded. That's one reason why "Strad" violins today are often worth millions of dollars.

Many would say that Stradivarius violins come close to musical perfection. Perfection is a rare commodity. In today's reading, Isaiah exalts God as perfect in every way. He alone is worthy of our worship. No one is like Him. He is the first and the last. His attributes include every kind of goodness and power imaginable: He is the King, the Redeemer, the Almighty. He has complete knowledge of the past, present, and future. He is the Savior, the Rock, the Creator of all. He is unfailingly righteous, truthful, and loving.

Israel, however, followed other gods. What was the so-called "competition"? Isaiah unleashed the full force of his sarcasm. The "gods" Israel preferred were sticks of wood. Through sheer chance, they had ended up on a craftsman's bench rather than as kindling for a fire. As it was, these idols were made by human hands. How, we can imagine him shouting derisively, did you come to

trust in such knick-knacks to save you?

God's words are guaranteed to come true. He said conquest and exile were coming. He said there would later be a return. He said Cyrus would be summoned by name. He said that one day His kingdom will come in power and every knee will bow. And He has invited, "Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth" (Isaiah 45:22–23; cf. Phil. 2:10–11).

**APPLY THE WORD** Today's verse in particular highlights the perfection and trustworthiness of God. He is the first and the last. Everything begins with Him; everything ends with Him. He lacks nothing; He always keeps His promises. His justice is sure, His wisdom is perfect, and His love never fails. In your devotions today, take some extra time to meditate on the Lord's attributes. Which ones have been emphasized in Isaiah? Which ones have been more relevant to your recent personal experience? Praise Him for all He is and does!

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O Jacob, My servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen.—Isa. 44.1

In this chapter we have three of these messages of Jehovah. They also are linked with the proclamation concerning the Servant in Isaiah 42 by the opening words of Isa 43—"But now." Let this be kept in mind as we read. The first message here, called the nation not to fear, in view of Jehovah's redeeming purpose to pour His Spirit upon its seed (Isa 44:1-5). The second is perhaps the finest satire in all the prophecy against false gods, in which the method of their making is mocked at; their futility is declared; and the people of God are called upon to remember these things (Isa 44:6-23). In the last the greatness of Jehovah is celebrated in creation and in government; and His appointment of Cyrus as the instrument to accomplish His pleasure is announced (Isa 44:24-27). We have emphasized these opening words to fasten attention upon the fact that throughout these messages, which interpret the purpose of Jehovah in the appointment of His Servant, the thoughts of Creation and Redemption persist, the ultimate emphasis being upon Redemption; and that therefore the nation is seen and referred to, as failing and yet as fulfilling the true ideal. It is Jacob; but it is Israel. It is Jacob; but it is Jeshurun. Thus we see the outlook of God, and understand His method. He sees Jacob, knows all about the persistent failure; therefore the dispensations of punishment; Jacob must pass through travail. But all the while He sees Israel, as set upon realization; therefore Israel must come to triumph. Once more let us remind ourselves that this redeeming realization of creative purpose will be brought about through the Servant of Jehovah.- G Campbell Morgan

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### **Isaiah 44:3 "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty."**

When a believer has fallen into a low, sad state of feeling, he often tries to lift himself out of it by chastening himself with dark and doleful fears. Such is not the way to rise from the dust, but to continue in it. As well chain the eagle's wing to make it mount, as doubt in order to increase our grace. It is not the law, but the gospel which saves the seeking soul at first; and it is not a legal bondage, but gospel liberty which can restore the fainting believer afterwards. Slavish fear brings not back the backslider to God, but the sweet wooings of love allure him to Jesus' bosom. Are you this morning thirsting for the living God, and unhappy because you cannot find him to the delight of your heart? Have you lost the joy of religion, and is this your prayer, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation"? Are you conscious also that you are barren, like the dry ground; that you are not bringing forth the fruit unto God which he has a right to expect of you; that you are not so useful in the Church, or in the world, as your heart desires to be? Then here is exactly the promise which you need, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty." You shall receive the grace you so much require, and you shall have it to the utmost reach of your needs. Water refreshes the thirsty: you shall be refreshed; your desires shall be gratified. Water quickens sleeping vegetable life: your life shall be quickened by fresh grace. Water swells the buds and makes the fruits ripen; you shall have fructifying grace: you shall be made fruitful in the ways of God. Whatever good quality there is in divine grace, you shall enjoy it to the full. All the riches of divine grace you shall receive in plenty; you shall be as it were drenched with it: and as sometimes the meadows become flooded by the bursting rivers, and the fields are turned into pools, so shall you be—the thirsty land shall be springs of water. - Spurgeon Morning and Evening

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### **Isaiah 44:3–5 A promise for us and for our children**

'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty ... I will pour my spirit upon thy seed ... and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses, One shall say, I am the LORD's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob.' Isaiah 44:3–5

The thirsty land shall be springs of water. O my brethren, when the Holy Spirit visits a man, what a difference is made in him! I know a preacher, once as dull and dead a man as ever misused a pulpit; under his slumbering ministrations there were few conversions, and the congregation grew thinner and thinner, good men sighed in secret, and the enemy said, 'Aha! so would we have it.' The revival came, the Holy Spirit worked gloriously, the preacher felt the divine fire and suddenly woke up to energy and zeal. The man appeared to be transformed; his tongue seemed touched with fire; elaborate and written discourses were laid aside, and he began to talk out of his own glowing heart to the hearts of others. He preached as he had never done before; the place filled; the dry bones were stirred, and quickening began. Those who knew him once so elegant, correct, passionless, dignified, cold, lifeless, and unprofitable, asked in amazement, 'Is Saul also among the prophets?' The Spirit of God is a great wonder-worker. You will notice

certain church members; they have never been good for much; we have had their names on the roll, and that is all: suddenly the Spirit of God has come upon them, and they have been honoured among us for their zeal and usefulness. We have seen them here and there and everywhere diligent in the service of God, and foremost in all sorts of Christian labour, though before you could hardly get them to stir an inch. I would then that the quickening Spirit would come down upon me, and upon you, upon every one of us in abundance, to create men valiant for truth and mighty for the Lord. O for some of the ancient valour of apostolic times. - 365 Days with Spurgeon

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#### **Isaiah 44:5 A revival promise**

'One shall say, I am the LORD's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel.' Isaiah 44:5

One memorable thing about conversions wrought by the Holy Spirit is this, that these converted people shall be led to confess their faith. They shall not, like Nicodemus, come to Jesus by night; they shall not hope to go to heaven creeping all the way behind the hedge, but they shall avow their allegiance. 'One shall say, I am the LORD's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel.' The God of Israel shall be their God, and the people of Israel shall be their people. I love to see both these things in young converts. Some appear to dedicate themselves to God, but they feel themselves such superior beings that they do not join with any church, but hold themselves in the isolation which practically means, 'Stand by; I am holier than thou.' They do not think any church good enough for them, but my private opinion is that they are not good enough for any church. On the other hand, some will join a church, but do not seem to have had enough respect to the inward, vital part of religion in giving themselves up to the Lord, and therefore no church will find them to be any great gain. There must be the two together, a surrender to God and then a union with the people of God. Consider the first of these points—'One shall say, I am the LORD's'. He shall confess that from head to foot, body, soul and spirit, he is not his own but Christ's. He will feel, 'I have been washed in his blood; I have been pardoned all my sins and been renewed in heart; and now I am the Lord's and desire to live to his praise. Tell me what I can do and how I can serve the Lord, for I am his and mean to be his for ever.' This is delightful. - 365 Days with Spurgeon

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#### **Isaiah 44:21 Not Forgotten**

"Thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me."—Isaiah 44:21

OUR Jehovah cannot so forget His servants as to cease to love them. He chose them not for a time, but forever. He knew what they would be when He called them into the divine family. He blots out their sins like a cloud; and we may be sure that He will not turn them out-of-doors for iniquities which He has blotted out. It would be blasphemy to imagine such a thing.

He will not forget them so as to cease to think of them. One forgetful moment on the part of our God would be our ruin. Therefore He says: "Thou shalt not be forgotten of me." Men forget us: those whom we have benefitted turn against us. We have no abiding place in the fickle hearts of men, but God will never forget one of His true servants. He binds Himself to us not by what we do for Him, but by what he has done for us. We have been loved too long and bought at too great a price to be now forgotten. Jesus sees in us His soul's travail, and that He never can forget. The Father sees in us the spouse of His Son, and the Spirit sees in us His own effectual work. The Lord thinketh upon us. This day we shall be succored and sustained. Oh, that the Lord may never be forgotten of us! - Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook

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#### **Isaiah 44:22 "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee."**

Attentively observe THE INSTRUCTIVE SIMILITUDE: our sins are like a cloud. As clouds are of many shapes and shades, so are our transgressions. As clouds obscure the light of the sun, and darken the landscape beneath, so do our sins hide from us the light of Jehovah's face, and cause us to sit in the shadow of death. They are earth-born things, and rise from the miry places of our nature; and when so collected that their measure is full, they threaten us with storm and tempest. Alas! that, unlike clouds, our sins yield us no genial showers, but rather threaten to deluge us with a fiery flood of destruction. O ye black clouds of sin, how can it be fair weather with our souls while ye remain?

Let our joyful eye dwell upon THE NOTABLE ACT of divine mercy—"blotting out." God himself appears upon the scene, and in divine benignity, instead of manifesting his anger, reveals his grace: he at once and for ever effectually removes the mischief, not by blowing away the cloud, but by blotting it out from existence once for all. Against the justified man no sin remains, the great transaction of the cross has eternally removed his transgressions from him. On Calvary's summit the great deed, by which the sin of all the chosen was for ever put away, was completely and effectually performed.

Practically let us obey THE GRACIOUS COMMAND, "return unto me." Why should pardoned sinners live at a distance from their God? If we have been forgiven all our sins, let no legal fear withhold us from the boldest access to our Lord. Let backslidings be

bemoaned, but let us not persevere in them. To the greatest possible nearness of communion with the Lord, let us, in the power of the Holy Spirit, strive mightily to return. O Lord, this night restore us! - Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

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### **Isaiah 44:23 The song of songs**

‘Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.’ Isaiah 44:23

The meaning of the whole seems to be this, that wherever saints are they ought to praise God for redeeming love, whether they climb the Alps or descend into the plains, whether they dwell in the cities or walk in the quietude of the woods. In whatever state of mind they feel themselves they still should praise redeeming grace and dying love, whether on the mountain top of communion or in the valley of humiliation, whether lifted up by prosperity or cast down by adversity. They should leave a shining trail of praise behind them in their daily course even as does the vessel when it ploughs the sea. The text calls upon all classes and conditions of men to praise God for redemption. You that are lifted up like mountains—magistrates, princes, kings and emperors—and you who lie beneath like plains, you who eat bread in the sweat of your faces, you children of poverty and toil, rejoice in redeeming love. You who dwell in the midst of sin as in a tangled forest, you who have transgressed against God and plunged into the deep places of vice, be glad, for you may be restored. All you of woman born, together praise the Redeemer of Israel, for he has accomplished the salvation of his people! Let us join in this song. Mr Sankey is now behind me, but he cannot sing sweetly enough to set forth to the full the majesty of this song, nor could the choicest choir of singing men and singing women; this task exceeds the reach of the seraphim themselves. Praise is silenced, O Lord, by the glory of thy love. Yet, brethren, let us give forth such music as we have. - 365 Days with Spurgeon

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