

SEPTEMBER 12

Isaiah 10-11

Isaiah 10

Vs. 1-4 are still talking about the sin and guilt of the northern kingdom. Notice the refrain, *For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still*. That connects this to what we read yesterday. Also, just for trivia, notice vs. 1 & 2. Verse 1 identifies the oppressors. Verse 2 identifies their motives with the preposition *to* and then shows the results of their actions marked by *that*.

Vs. 5-11 In God's wisdom and purpose He uses the arrogance of the Assyrians, this lost, godless nation, to punish godless Israel.

Vs. 12-14 There would be an aspect of Assyria's victories that should have shown them that God was helping them. This would be an opportunity (like Pharaoh had) to come closer to the true God. But they attributed their victories to their own prowess. After God used them, He would judge them for their arrogance, but not until they railed against God Himself.

Vs. 15-19 God says how He would chasten Assyria before they could attack Jerusalem. We have read the account of this in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles, and soon we will see it again in Isaiah 36-37. That this event is mentioned three times in the Bible points to its significance.

Vs. 16-18 In one night God killed 185,000 soldiers. This shows us that the physical means was a sudden sickness, like a plague, brought on by the angel of the Lord.

V. 19 The survivors who returned to Assyria were so few that a child could count them.

Vs. 20-23 This is the remnant God will save from the northern kingdom. During Hezekiah's revival, he invited people from the northern kingdom to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem. All those who came south survived. Paul quotes v. 22 in Romans 9:27, showing that Israel would be punished, but that a remnant would be saved.

Vs. 24-27 God compares this to how He saved Israel from Egypt. In light of all of this prophecy, the people of Judah, and Jerusalem in particular, should trust the Lord. This is exactly what happened when Rabshakeh stood outside Jerusalem in 2 Kings 18:27. The people kept silent and trusted the Lord by obeying Hezekiah's command.

Vs. 28-34 This is God's prophetic description of His judgment of Assyria.

Isaiah 11

Based on this coming miraculous deliverance and the judgment God is about to bring on Israel and its enemies, God gave Isaiah a vision of the ultimate deliverance at the close of the age when the Messiah would reign and bring judgment to the earth. This is one of those great portions of prophecy, so take time reading this and making observations.

Vs. 1-9 This is the Messiah and the poetic tenor of His reign. These are great verses talking about Jesus. This is the Branch we talked about earlier. The Hebrew word for branch is "nasar," and it is where they got the name Nazareth.

V. 1 Even though there will only be a remnant, or stump, of Israel left, the Branch will still come forth and bear fruit. In talking about the necessity of His own death, Jesus said this in John 12:24, *Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit*.

V. 4 This is the justice the Lord will bring. There are some allusions to other portions of Scripture. Do you recognize them?

Vs. 6-9 This is the peace that He will bring. Some of those verses about the created world in Romans 8 make sense in this light. To a degree, things will revert back to a pre-fallen world. But those people born during the Millennial Kingdom will still have the fallen heart of man and will need to come to the very visible Jesus in faith and repentance. It may be a near perfect world under the Messiah, but Satan will still find hearts ready for rebellion when he begins his revolt after the 1000 years.

V. 10 Notice the phrase, *In that day*. Jerusalem will become the center of the earth, and Jesus will be the king reigning in the temple. This verse is quoted in Romans 15:12.

Vs. 11-16 In that final day of the Tribulation, the Jews will be gathered from every nation where they have been hiding and scattered during the Tribulation. *And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.* (Matt. 24:31)

For us as disciples, the coming kingdom, judgment, and blessing of God should always be before us. In the Lord's Prayer, the attitude behind all of our praying is to remember that His kingdom is coming. As we see here, however, His coming is always associated with the distress of this present darkness. He will be light and salvation for those who know Him, but He will be the opposite for those who don't. Our job is to herald His salvation and His coming. This morning I was reading that Jesus told His disciples to preach as they went saying, *The kingdom of heaven is at hand*. It's still a good message and it is essential to the gospel.

2 Corinthians 12:11-21

Vs. 11-13 When Paul said he was nothing, he meant it. Yet, what *God* did with Paul was the verification that he was sent by God; i.e., an apostle. We have no idea all of the miracles that Paul did in Corinth.

V. 13 This is a multidirectional jab.

Vs. 14-18 It seems so unfair that Paul should have to write this, but for the sake of the health of the church, to ward off the false teachers, Paul kept dealing with the situation. Even in Paul working with the Corinthians in a blameless fashion, the super-apostles found a way to twist his motives. Paul knew another visit was necessary.

Vs. 19-21 Paul makes the point here of saying that his goal was not to defend his apostleship, but to help them grow in Christ. Paul has done surgery on their sickness, not to exalt himself or defend himself, but to get the church back in love with their Lord. In Paul's final words here, it looks like the issue he addressed at the end of 1 Corinthians 6 still hadn't been corrected. Thankfully we know there was a happy ending, because the letter to the Romans was written on Paul's next visit to Corinth. Reading between the lines in Romans 16, Corinth seems at peace.

As disciples, with the amazing salvation that is offered to the world, and with the blessing of Christ's coming kingdom, you'd think that "church" might be easier, since the church is the group that's supposed to get the job done on earth in the harvest. Still, the church is what the Lord has decided; and it is our task as disciples, not to "do church," but to make church about making disciples in the harvest, following Jesus. True disciples are in love with their Lord and follow Him into the harvest, making disciples, who make disciples. Get a group of those kind of disciples together, and maybe you'll have a great "church."

Psalm 56

This again was in those early days of running from Saul. Some of the desperation here might have been self-inflicted, since David never consulted God before he sought refuge in Gath. It just seemed like a good idea. In God's mercy, David escaped.

Vs. 1-4 David was learning some hard lessons. The son-in-law of the king was being pursued to be killed by the king. David obviously was beside himself, running first to the priests and lying, and then running to the king of Gath and lying. Like all of us, it took David time to settle his heart and go to the Lord.

Vs. 5-7 Like Job, David knew there would be justice, yet he still had to run for his life.

Vs. 8-11 David was entering into a 10-year education in waiting on the Lord. These verses are a very gutty and faith-driven declaration of what God meant to David. The distress was making David go to the Lord.

Vs. 12-13 David had been anointed by Samuel as a boy of 12 or 13. This reality was beginning to settle in. God had rescued him from Saul and from the king of Gath. David was realizing that the Lord had saved him and wanted him to walk before God, so David had made vows of trust and praise. He would learn over and over again to fulfill those vows of praise.

Proverbs 23:6-8

I think I've experienced something like this, even among believers. Better to live a simple life with simple people whose hearts are with you in the harvest. Trying to build things God doesn't want built and do things God doesn't want done creates a lot of insincerity.