

SEPTEMBER 19

I know your head is probably swimming in all of this reading in Isaiah and in Galatians. If so, I would suggest not reading with any other expectation than what the Spirit just surprises you with. Today we'll read, *in quietness and in trust shall be your strength*. Let the Lord speak, and just read. After you've read these books year after year, you'll be surprised at what the Spirit keeps showing you. So, don't worry about getting everything now. Also, remember that a frappuccino and some chocolate can be used by the Spirit to sweeten the experience.

Isaiah 30:12-33:12

Regarding Isaiah, what general impressions are you getting? God seems to be saying a lot about the city of Zion and the Messiah, about the coming armies, the coming judgments, the coming salvations, and the final state of His people. God takes the near events that will show judgment and salvation, and projects them to the end of the age to a final judgment and final salvation. The faith of God's people is shown in those who wait, trust and hope in Him, as opposed to those who go running for all sorts of other help. These are good lessons for us as we work now in the harvest. Our hearts are strengthened by looking forward to our Lord's return. *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,* ¹²*training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,* ¹³*waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.* (Titus 2:11-13)

Isaiah 30:12-33

Vs. 12-14 These people that spoke to God as they did in vs. 10-11 will be punished. Jesus said men would be judged by every careless word they utter. For those who don't know the Lord, the "record" button is down. For those of us who know Christ and keep asking for forgiveness for our mouths, He hits "erase."

V. 15 This verse stands alone between God's judgments, as an encouragement to those who wait on Him. And what a great verse it is. God is the Holy One of Israel. All of the preparing that the people did in their anxiety was wasted. They dug tunnels, ran to Egypt for help, gathered stones for throwing; but when that night came, when they realized that God was their only hope, they were quiet. God saved them without their effort.

Vs. 16-17 This will be the fate of those who seek help, other than the Lord.

Vs. 18-33 This all has to do with the restoration of the people and God's fighting for Jerusalem and His people. Remember that the immediate threat and deliverance has to do with Assyria, but you can see that God often gave Isaiah words that can only be understood in terms of the future Tribulation and their final deliverance. God will show the world that this is His people and His city. Remember, too, that Israel is being used for a purpose for all of mankind. In terms of the drama on earth, their purpose and position is important. When we are all with God, according to Galatians 3:28, *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

V. 19 Notice again, that Zion is in the focus of this promise.

V. 21 If this is the Tribulation, God will be very quick at this time to respond to His people.

V. 22 As a result of the amazing deliverance of God, people will trash all those things upon which they had depended.

V. 23 This is freedom from fear. I would imagine that Israel today is not this relaxed and open.

V. 26 In Matthew 24:29, Jesus said that near the end of the Tribulation the sun would be darkened. It could be that the light of the sun will be diminished during the Tribulation (meteor

hits, volcanoes, dust clouds), and when the Lord sets up His kingdom He will clean up the atmosphere. Or, it could be that the sun itself will finally start running out of gas. In any case the Lord will correct this and the sun will shine brighter than normal, but not to worry, those people in the Millennium won't need sunscreen.

And there will be healing. We'll see this more in Ezekiel and in Revelation.

Vs. 27-30 But before the Millennium fully begins, there will come the judgment of the nations.

Vs. 31-33 Back in the present day, the judgment on the Assyrians will soon be fulfilled. After the Assyrians left 185,000 corpses, I'm sure they had to burn them. It also makes you think of the final judgment and the lake of fire.

Isaiah 31

Vs. 1-3 God really wanted the people to trust Him and not to go to Egypt. Notice here that their desire was so set to seek this help from Egypt, they decided not to consult the Lord at all. If you want to see the real heart of this, look at Jeremiah 42 where the remnant asks Jeremiah to seek the Lord for them and they will do whatever He says. God tells them not to go to Egypt for help. *Azariah the son of Hoshai and Johanan the son of Kareah and all the insolent men said to Jeremiah, "You are telling a lie. The LORD our God did not send you to say, 'Do not go to Egypt to live there.'"* (Jere. 43:2)

Vs. 4-5 God's coming will be without hesitation. Notice the references to Jerusalem and Zion.

Vs. 6-7 This is the appeal for them to trust Him. When they see what God will do, they will know their idols are all worthless.

Vs. 8-9 We've read before how the Lord slayed 185,000 men in one night. God made Zion like a furnace which they came too close to and it consumed them.

Isaiah 32

Here we have the promise of blessing interwoven with the promise of judgment.

Vs. 1-4 This is the Messiah in His kingdom and the people will finally hear and understand. Verse 2 is pretty famous. Notice too in v. 4 that being *hasty* is synonymous with foolishness and a lack of faith. There seems to be a link between what is said here and what was said in Isaiah 28:16.

Vs. 5-8 True nobility will be honored, but there will be no room for fools or the wicked.

Vs. 9-14 Those who are proud and live for comfort and commerce will be humbled. Apparently the women were a reflection of their husbands. That is interesting if you think about Ephesians 5:25-26.

Vs. 15-20 But the Spirit will be poured out in the Millennium. Isn't the progression of vs. 16-18 cool? Verse 19 seems to talk about the distress of the Tribulation that leads up to that time. Verse 20 seems to say that even in that great time of distress, those who have the Spirit and trust in God will be blessed. The waters sound like those of Psalm 1, and the ox and donkey running loose indicate there is no care or anxiety for commerce and comforts, indicating that these people have their treasure in heaven, not on earth.

Isaiah 33

V. 1 This woe appears to be against Assyria.

Vs. 2-6 Notice again that God will keep the people safe who wait on Him regardless of the turmoil around them. Notice the two mentions of Zion, His city.

Vs. 7-9 In contrast, those who hoped in treaties and promises are distressed with everything.

Vs. 10-12 God will consume everyone, Jew or Assyrian, who does not honor Him. Everything they have worked for was flammable and it produced what was burnable, so God will burn it. Doesn't this sound like *wood, hay, straw* from 1 Corinthians 3.

One of the great things that came from Solomon was the promise God made to dwell in Zion in the temple. Those who truly loved God and understood that promise, along with the promise to Abraham, understood why God had protected Jerusalem and then had allowed Jerusalem to be destroyed. They also understood that God would be faithful and fulfill His promise to dwell again in Zion. And so it will happen. But until God fulfills those promises, we are told to trust and wait patiently on the Lord. So much of what we are reading in The Psalms has exactly the same message. Look again at Isaiah 30:15. What do you think the Lord is saying to us as disciples?

Galatians 5:1-12

V. 1 This is now the theme of the rest of the book. Paul has established that salvation is only by grace through faith in Christ. So what about the rest of the Christian life? If works are presented first, there is no salvation; but what if you are already saved and now link following Christ to works? Is that really bad? This verse seems to say that gathering works into our lives is not why Christ set us free. Just to get another angle on this, I was reading Philippians this morning and came on 3:1-10. If you read this you'll be amazed how close it is to what we are reading here. In Philippians, Paul says that works keep us from knowing Christ and experiencing the power of the resurrection. Works focus us on us and trying to win God's approval. Faith focuses us on pursuing and knowing Christ in His love and grace, and the power of His resurrection in us.

Vs. 2-6 The power of following Christ is found in faith working in love. Our worth, our motivation, our joy, our mission, everything is linked to that love that is poured into our hearts. That's why we follow by faith. Adding anything to our relationship with God hinders our following and adds weight and encumbrance to our walk, like David trying to put on Saul's armor to face Goliath. *Fallen away from grace* means understanding ourselves in a way other than being fully accepted and complete in God's grace. Look again at Romans 5:1-5.

V. 4 Did you catch Paul being "cute" here by using the word *severed*? Those who desire to be cut in circumcision will be cut off from Christ (disconnected from experiencing His grace).

Vs. 7-12 Paul and the Spirit are upset. Verse 9 is important. Once you begin to define yourself by works and not by grace, like yeast, it spreads through everything, to every part of your relationship with God. It might begin with one act, but then doing works becomes linked to everything, even your schedule and habits. It is easy to fall into condemnation, if you are justified in your life by doing certain things and repeating certain behaviors. Your life and God's relationship to you becomes measurable in terms of those acts and works.

V. 10 Paul was very bold in saying this other person or persons were wrong.

V. 11 If Paul was teaching religion, he would have been passed off as harmless. That Paul preached Christ was a serious threat to the Jews, in that Jesus fulfilled the law and made Judaism kaput. When Paul preached Christ to the Gentiles, they understood that all men had to come under the power of Christ. They didn't like that either.

V. 12 Remember, the Spirit wrote this. That's pretty scary. ☺

Paul's opponents were worried about cheap grace and so they brought in works. But following Christ must always be based on His grace and love understood by faith. Mixing works to our walk becomes toxic to our hearts and defines our worth and His love for us through our doing. Doing works becomes about us. We are never loved more or less, and His grace is still our joy. His Word constantly washes us in the undeserved grace and love we have been shown in Christ. We should never recover from the undeserved love Jesus has shown us. And following Christ is

purely expressed in Galatians 2:20, *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

Once you have love and grace down, you truly work like crazy in the harvest, without pride and without comparison. You are always pursuing your Lord whom you love like no other.

Psalm 63

It says that David wrote this in the wilderness of Judah. Immediately I thought of the words, *the Word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness.* That was in Judah, too. And Jesus was led into the wilderness. That's a funny place to find God or to be led and tempted, but it seems like God consistently does this for those to whom He wishes to prepare for His harvest. This is a wonderful song from David. It cost him something to be able to write this, and it costs us something to truly enjoy it.

Vs. 1-4 This is David's heart. It is like his signature. We don't read until v. 9 that he is in distress. What we see here is the great longing of his heart to be with the Lord. David drew deeply from God's *steadfast love* and was always ready to *praise* God.

Vs. 5-8 I wonder when this was written. David seems to be proven and secure in distress, meditating on the Lord, full of praise and clinging to the Lord.

Vs. 9-11 Here is the tension and the contrast. Men sought David to kill him, but God loved David. Who do you think would win? David knew, but he still humbly cried out to God.

Proverbs 23:22

In every generation there have been parents who were evil and not to be trusted. So putting those examples aside and realizing that there might be an exception here or there, here is the rule and the caution spoken to us by the Lord. A person will be blessed by listening to his father and by respecting the words and values of his mother when she is old. Amen.