

SEPTEMBER 27

Today's reading has two very important sections of the Bible. When we realize that God has crafted His Word to strengthen and lead us, we realize how He loves us. Being able to be in His Word every day is a privilege we don't deserve, and yet we can enjoy it if we want to. Jesus promised to speak to us in John 16:12-15, *I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.* ¹³*When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.* ¹⁴*He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.* ¹⁵*All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.* Time to have a talk.

Isaiah 51-53

When we read this section today, it is easy to see how the people in Jesus' day thought the Messiah would bring the kingdom and eternal deliverance at His first coming. They didn't understand that the purpose of His first coming was to present Himself as an offering for sin. They didn't understand the Scriptures, that they would reject Him. They didn't see the church age, but then no one did. The church was hidden.

We will read today that God will deliver the people by the hand of the Messiah. There was a hint of that final deliverance in their release from the Babylonian captivity, but the way this final deliverance is described, it is certainly focused on the second advent of Christ, when He comes to reign in Zion for a thousand years.

Isaiah 51

As you read this chapter circle the commands to *listen*, *look*, and *awake*. Try to understand what unique thing God is saying in each of these sections. There are lots of words that are repeated.

Vs. 1-3 The people of promise are really from the promise of Abraham. The law showed their inability without faith to follow God. It revealed sin. They were born in the redemptive plan of God. Israel had been barren because of their sin, but God would lead them to blessing as He used them to fulfill their destiny.

Vs. 4-11 Notice the mentions of God's *righteousness* and His *salvation*. God will not only save and bring people to Himself, but it will be done with righteousness. All of mankind, bowing their knees before God, will have to admit to His justice and righteousness. All those who are judged will know they deserve it. All those who are saved will know that it was grace and that God did it righteously.

V. 5 Notice the mention of God's *arms*. When Mary praises God in Luke 1:51, she says, *He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.* She and the Spirit clearly saw the coming of the Messiah in this show of power and regard for the weak.

V. 11 In Isaiah, there has been a continual focus on Zion.

Vs. 12-16 This section seems to be God declaring that it is He who *comforts* the people. He says *to Zion*, "*You are my people.*" This is interesting when you think that Jesus wept over Jerusalem. The people were living in fear because they trusted in other things.

Vs. 15 and 16 are God's declaration of His love and power to protect. This is a very tender reminder to the people that God wants them to embrace Him. It speaks to me too.

Vs. 17-23 Here it seems, prophetically speaking, judgment has been passed on Israel, and God again will redeem and restore His people. Then, God will take the cup of judgment given to Israel and pass it around to the nations who have oppressed Israel.

Isaiah 52

Vs. 1-6 Jerusalem is to rejoice in its restoration from captivity. But v. 6 indicates there will be a future recognition of the Lord. That would be when the Messiah comes and they truly have God's law written on their hearts.

Vs. 7-10 This is definitely when Jesus comes again to Jerusalem.

V. 10 is pretty cool. CNN will probably carry this live. On a more serious note, Jesus doesn't say what the sign in the sky will be that heralds His coming, but all nations will see it at the same time, and they will mourn. Everyone will know that Jesus is the Messiah and God has come to set up His kingdom. Israel will not mourn, and Jerusalem will be a very exciting place to be.

Vs. 11-12 This is safety for those who trust God in those final hours before the Messiah comes.

Vs. 13-15 When the world sees the Messiah come, there will be some surprises and some shut mouths. I wonder what the ACLU and those voices for religious pluralism and tolerance will say.

Isaiah 53

These verses answer the shock of the past few verses. They should have believed but didn't. This chapter is spoken from the perspective of Israel, the failed servant, speaking in repentance about its Lord, the Suffering Servant and Savior of man. At the end, the voice is from the Father.

This isn't "law," but I would suggest that every serious disciple memorize this chapter. I wish I had done it earlier in my walk with the Lord. I have a feeling that this chapter will be very important to the Jews in the Tribulation.

V. 1 The initial question is regarding *who has believed* and why they should have believed.

V. 2 There was a contrast. Those who sought the Lord saw Him. For the others, Jesus had as much desirability as looking at a root of a tree exposed above the surface of the ground. That is still true today.

V. 3 Humanly speaking, Jesus was a jobless man from a poor background with nothing going for Him.

V. 4 Some may have sensed that He was bearing our sin, but it looked like He was having a lot of bad luck, like God was against Him.

V. 5 But the reality was this.

V. 6 This is their confession of sin.

V. 7 This was true at His death, and even when you read what Jesus said in conflict with the Pharisees, He could have said so much more. I was reading today when Jesus told Peter He could have asked the Father for 12 legions (12,000) of angels, but His thought was for us. He said to Peter in John 18:11, *Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?* Matthew 26:54 says, *But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?* Being quiet was important and it took commitment and strength.

V. 8 At the point of Jesus' death, not even His disciples understood.

V. 9 Jesus was killed with two thieves; and Joseph of Arimathea, *a rich man*, placed Jesus' body in his own tomb.

V. 10 This is the Servant as commissioned by the Father. Notice that Jesus not only had to submit, but also had to actively make Himself *an offering for sin*. And look what happened after He did this.

V. 11 I like the RSV here; *He shall see the fruit of the travail of His soul and be satisfied*. By His knowledge of God's plan He obeyed and we are saved. As His disciples we have this knowledge too. Do we live by it?

V. 12 As a man, Jesus is the greatest man who ever lived. No one has ever accomplished for mankind what Jesus has.

Notice that He (Jesus) *shall divide the spoil with the strong*. I associate this sharing of spoil not as giving eternal life to believers, but in the harvest, sharing richly with those who labor with Him. You see this in Ephesians 4:8. Jesus also said to His disciples, *the one who endures to the end will be saved*. (Matt. 10:22, 24:13) In that context, being "saved" isn't salvation, it is preservation from damage. A person who endures will maintain a clear attitude of faith. It is no news to us that trouble is coming. In the song that Paul quoted to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:11-12, he says, *If we have died with Him, we will also live with Him; if we endure, we will also reign with Him*. I think there is a special sharing of strength and blessing with those who are working strongly in the harvest with Him.

Ephesians 5

Vs. 1-2 This is like striking the tuning fork to focus us again on the correct tone. That tone is the love of Christ and the example of Jesus for the church. It is interesting that we just read Isaiah 53.

Vs. 3-6 Our lives are to be different, following the example of Christ. This is a dying world with all sorts of people being deceived and needing the truth. The church in the harvest shouldn't treat this stuff lightly within her walls. We should extend forgiveness, but as disciples we need to be focused on our Lord and the harvest.

Vs. 7-14 Living our lives for Christ in the harvest, connecting with people near us, will cast enough light to be used by God in His purpose for us. But, we need to live for Christ. We need to allow His change in us, following Him and praising Him, to make us distinctly His. If we lie and complain and do what everyone else does, what good is that? Jesus told His disciples to be salt and light. If you read those commands by Jesus in Matthew 5, you see that they are very strongly stated.

Vs. 15-21 This is the nature of our walk with Christ.

Notice that we are to be alert, walking like a super spy, observing everything. That is why this is linked to not being foolish (walking unaware) but instead understanding *what the will of the Lord is*. This is like in John 5, where Jesus observed what the Father was doing and did it. We are to walk observantly and expectantly, knowing that the Lord is around us working; and once observed, we should join in.

Vs. 19-21 This sounds like a worship service, but this is still our walk. So, how do you define being filled with the Spirit? Here it is:

- *Addressing one another* to strengthen and build each other up for our walk as disciples.
- Having our lives focused in the reality of our salvation (chapters 1-3), as we walk in the harvest.
- Always and for everything, *giving thanks*.
- *Submitting to one another* (in accordance with Christ) *out of reverence for Christ*.

Vs. 22-33 It is funny, that when God points to us being salt and light, following the Spirit, He addresses marriage first.

Vs. 22-24 I didn't write this, but it is still in force.

Vs. 25-33 Husbands are to love their wives in two ways -

Vs. 25-27 First, by showing the love and leadership of Christ to their wives. This is a test of a man's understanding of this spiritual truth. If you know how Christ loved the church, it will be visible in your marriage.

This section says that Christ sanctified the church by the washing with the Word. So how does a husband imitate this with his wife. I would say that it is by him being connected to God, and in the Word daily himself, and then sharing what the Lord says to him with his wife. Many women suffer from franticness and insecurity, and it is the husband's responsibility to share the comfort of the Word with his wife. It is sort of like washing her feet, to take away the dust of the day.

Vs. 28-33 Second, husbands are to love their wives by showing their understanding of the physical and spiritual unity of man and woman, which reflects the unity of Christ and the church. There is something extremely spiritual about the bond of a man and a woman, and if a man ignores this, he ignores it to his own harm.

The marriage relationship is not only salt and light in a dying world, but I think too, it comes under the command to be very careful how we walk on this dying planet as we follow Christ in the harvest.

Psalm 69:19-36

It really is interesting to read this psalm and to also be reading about the Messiah in Isaiah. I know this was written by David and he experienced all of this; but having read Isaiah 53, and knowing that the psalm has application to Jesus, it is easy to see how it reflects what Jesus suffered for us.

Vs. 19-20 I was just reading today how Jesus asked the disciples to watch with Him, but they fell asleep. Finally the Father sent an angel to strengthen Jesus during that moment when He was praying in agony and sweating like a dying man.

V. 21 is quoted when they offered Jesus vinegar on the cross to keep Him alive long enough to see if Elijah would come and rescue Him.

Vs. 22-23 are quoted by Paul in Romans 11:10, describing God's judgment on Israel for their self-imposed blindness and rebellion.

Vs. 24-28 Although many were saved after Jesus' resurrection, the nation of Israel, its leaders and people, were judged by what they did to Jesus. This happened in 70 A.D., as the Romans destroyed the temple and the city.

V. 26 Think of this in terms of what you just read in Isaiah 53.

Vs. 29-36 These are not only the blessings on the Messiah for giving Himself, but the redeemed will share this blessing with Him in Zion.

And it all works together in praise to God.

Proverbs 24:7

In the gate is referring to the place of the judges and the elders of the people. It is not that the fool is suddenly wise and knows to keep his mouth closed; it is that he is not invited in, to give his "wisdom." Because it mentions the "gates" here, I automatically think of the elders of a church. There is some wisdom necessary and some dues to be paid in order to lead a church to work in the harvest, making disciples, who make disciples. Too many of the wrong men are often invited into the gates, having neither reaped nor sown in the harvest. They have made no disciples, and therefore, really have nothing to model or say, regarding the church and its mission of making disciples.