

SEPTEMBER 9

Isaiah 3-5

Isaiah 3

Notice the names of God here. Notice too that in the judgment, there is a complete destruction of and confusion in leadership. Everyone will need it, but it will not be found, at least not by looking down. It is an ironic justice since they should have been looking to God for leadership. So, He gave them what they had been seeking, life without His leadership.

Vs. 1-5 God will reduce the situation to where it will not be popular to lead. There will be no food, no soldiers and no leaders to rely on. Only the foolish or immature will want to lead. Obviously, there is no true shepherd who has a love for God who would lead in faith in spite of the dire situation. There is no one to stand in the gap.

Vs. 6-12 No responsible person will want to lead that rabble of wickedness. Notice the two times it says *woe*.

Vs. 13-15 This makes it clear that personal gain and comfort were the reasons that people led. That is why God said in v. 1 that He would take away the incentive. In order for these people to have lived well, they had crushed the poor. God is promising them judgment.

Vs. 16-17 This is another view of the abuse of the leaders. Their wives were part of the problem. These two verses are contrasts. Verse 16 is what they had, and v. 17 is what they will get. When captives were led into exile, sometimes they were taken and marched along naked.

Vs. 18-26 This is another "before and after" comparison. Verses 18-23 show what they had. Verses 24-26 describe their future. Notice the word *instead*.

Isaiah 4

V. 1 This should probably belong to chapter 3. It is similar to 3:6. Women will look for a leader and there will be none.

Vs. 2-6 Enter the Branch. Rather than this referring to the remnant of Israel, this most likely refers to the Messiah, who is called the Branch in other places in the OT. This is a picture of the Messiah rescuing His people and Jerusalem at the last minute at the end of the Tribulation, and then leading them in the Millennial Kingdom.

Several words for branch are used to describe the Messiah. The Jews would have understood the different words, but would have known they referred to one man called the Branch. In Isaiah 11:1 the word for branch is "nesar," from which came the word Nazareth and the prophecy in Matthew 2:23, *And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene*. Since there is no prophecy in the Old Testament that said this, this quote in Matthew probably should read, "He shall be called a Branch." When the people said, "Jesus of Nazareth," they heard the word "branch" in that title. Those who were perceptive would have thought about it, but those with hard hearts wouldn't have made the connection.

Isaiah 5

Vs. 1-2 With the pictures of destruction and rescue in view, God now shows how He planted Israel as a vineyard and that this vineyard has become liable for judgment. What is interesting about this picture is that the description is very similar to the parable of the vineyard that Jesus used against the chief priests and Pharisees. *And he began to speak to them in parables. "A man planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a pit for the winepress and built a tower, and leased it to tenants and went into another country."* (Mark 12:1)

Vs. 3-7 This is the judgment against the vineyard. Notice the use of *I will*. Verse 7 connects to v. 3 and gives the reason for God's anger.

Vs. 8-23 These are the things that ruined the vineyard God planted and they are signaled by the word *woe*. If you have time, write the focus of each *woe* in the margin of your Bible.

Vs. 24-25 God declares His anger with Judah and Jerusalem. Notice that they ignored the Word of the Lord, and also, this description of what would happen was still years away. A word to the wise should have been sufficient.

Vs. 26-30 These lions would be the Babylonians who would eventually destroy the temple and the city and lead Judah into exile.

As disciples in the harvest, it is noticeable that even in this description of judgment, the Branch was promised to bring salvation and restoration. We work in a harvest that is under God's judgment and wrath, yet even as it gets darker every day, the offer of salvation is still there for any who reach out and take hold of the Branch. Especially as it gets darker, those who come to Christ will have a clearer understanding of their salvation and will be willing to follow as disciples making disciples in the harvest.

2 Corinthians 11:1-15

Vs. 1-3 The proof of Paul's apostleship and the focus of Paul's ministry was to have the people in love with Christ, focused on following Him in the harvest. The battle going on in Corinth had people focused on personalities and themselves.

V. 4 What an interesting charge against the spiritual stature of the Corinthians. The *super-apostles* might have come from Jerusalem, from the circumcision party, claiming authority from the Twelve and showing that their Jewish background was superior to Paul's. But what they actually proclaimed, what they said and the tone of it, had nothing to do with the Jesus whom Paul had presented to them. The fruit these false apostles had grown was causing divisiveness and fighting.

Vs. 5-6 Paul obviously was giving new and inspired teaching. The super-apostles weren't bringing anything new or moving the Corinthians into the harvest. They were leading them back to the law and causing the Corinthians to be self-centered. By their fruits they were known.

Vs. 7-11 Paul's boast was that he did not put an obstacle in the way of the gospel. The Corinthians' shame is that Paul never accepted financial help from Corinth because of their immaturity. Paul wrote of this in 1 Corinthians, that he had never taken any advantage of them financially. The super-apostles turned this around after hearing from the previous letter (1 Corinthians), saying that Paul was a real tricky guy and had been robbing other churches. Poor Paul and what a silly, deceived group of believers.

Vs. 12-15 Paul has shown them a lot of love and patience in the first chapters. It is time now for him to deal with these troublemakers.

V. 12 If the super-apostles were just like Paul, they should work without pay, like Paul. Remember the verses we just read in Isaiah. When God took away the food and drink, no one wanted to lead Judah. If these false apostles couldn't be paid, they wouldn't stay. They were not shepherds sent by the Good Shepherd. As we'll see tomorrow, the mark of Paul's apostleship in Christ was suffering with Christ; that is, doing without and paying the price of following. These false apostles thought the church was a means of gaining a good living.

V. 13 is very clear and to the point.

Vs. 14 -15 These are very famous verses. Just like in the leadership of Israel, the leadership of the church in the harvest is critical. There are so many opinions, and there are so many personalities, and there are so many motives that try to direct the church; but there is only one

Word and one commission. Our Lord came to seek and to save the lost. A servant is not greater than his master, nor is the one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If we know these things, blessed are we if we do them.

By the fact that God has included this conflict and these issues in Scripture, it is obvious that dealing with these issues and conflicts are an important part of helping the church keep focused in the harvest.

Psalm 53

Now everything is beginning to sound like Isaiah, although David lived before Isaiah. Oh, that's right, it really is the same Author. 😊

Vs. 1-4 Paul uses a lot of this in Romans 3. The fool feels confident in God's silence. The godly person knows that God is alive and working in the world every day.

V. 5 But God will judge. This seems like a hint of the Tribulation. There will be terror, but mankind will take it out on God's people. God, on the other hand, will protect His people and use them as a judgment on the earth.

V. 6 This longing will someday be fulfilled. The Messiah will reign in Zion and He will bring salvation not only for the Jews, but for all people.

Proverbs 22:28-29

V. 28 This says to me that there are some things handed down from past generations that we are meant to respect.

V. 29 Perhaps one of those things to respect is patient craftsmanship. The old craftsman doesn't do his work well in order to stand before kings. He does his work well, to do his work well. Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15, "*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*"

It is hard to find anyone today who is willing to devote himself to one skill and do it with patience and excellence. We have been taught to multi-task, to demand that everything comes faster and to work for the acclaim of others.