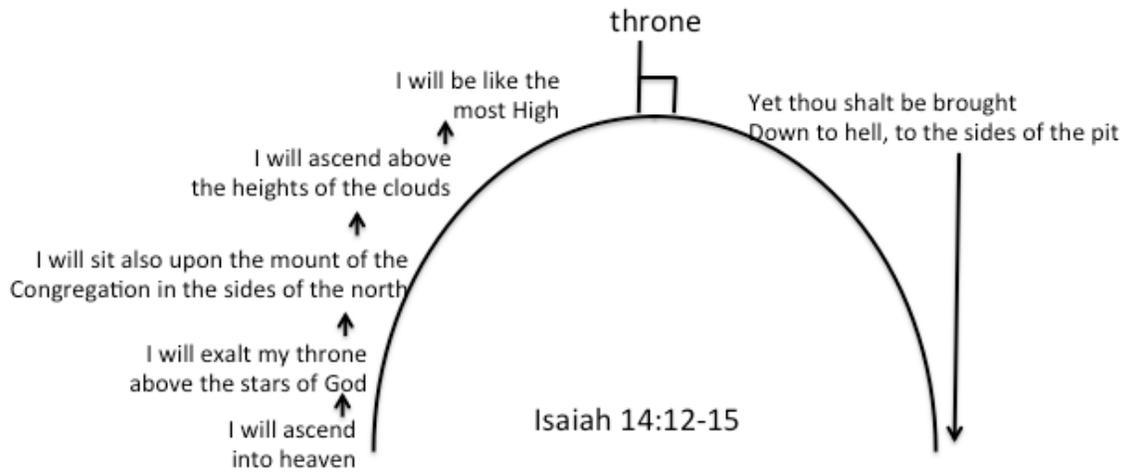


Opposite the Kenosis



Classroom in a Book Discipleship Series

Book 11

Watchman on the Wall

A New Look at the Book of Isaiah



Watchman on the Wall, A New Look at the Book of Isaiah

Vinson

**CLASSROOM IN A BOOK
DISCIPLESHIP SERIES**

Bok 11

**Watchman on the Wall
A New Look at the Book of Isaiah**

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Preface

THE CLASSROOM IN A BOOK DISCIPLESHIP SERIES

The *Classroom in a Book Discipleship Series* is a unique approach to education. The author has over thirty years of experience in classroom teaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Internet teaching. The teachings covered Old Testament, New Testament, Theology, Church History, Hermeneutics, Christian Ethics, Philosophy of Religion, Evangelism, and Biblical Backgrounds. In other words, the teacher was a generalist in the world of specialization.

During my latter years of teaching at the seminary, God sent two people into the classrooms that have made this series possible. One student brought in some audio recording gear into the seminary classrooms and recorded everything said by teacher and students. The other person, Helen Agnew, transcribed the tapes into weekly sessions. Finally, Helen put all the weeks together for a course into a book, which became the nucleus for a formal book. Next came the editing phases in which the improper English and sentence construction was corrected. Also, the organization and thought flow was improved in order to facilitate a reader's comprehension.

Each class session became a chapter that went through several iterations of the editing process. Also, Helen provided computer drawings of the theological charts and models used by the teacher. These models were inserted into the book at the appropriate places.

INFORMAL WRITING STYLE

You should be aware that the chosen style of communication in this series of books is much more informal than the typical. I have worked to retain the folksy way of expression

that I use in the classroom and pulpits. In a formal treatise, like my doctoral dissertation, the expression was stiff and formal (one may even say that it was written by a stuffed shirt). So, who is going to read my dissertation because of its stiff formality?

These books are going to be easy reading because they will be what you hear in everyday conversation. In the classroom, I am a great communicator. When reading the transcripts of my audio-recorded classroom lectures, the students have commented that they could actually hear my voice with its inflection and volume in the printed words. These sensory experiences add to the impact and learning by the reader. So, I want you to know that the folksy level of communication was purposefully chosen in order to enhance your learning experience.

Dear saint, you are in for a treat. There will be points of time in which your mind will be so absorbed into thinking new and analytical thoughts of our Most Wonderful Lord, that you will be unable to resist sharing them with a loved one. In my editing passes of the various drafts, I found myself reliving the classrooms and all the high emotion and drama. My pulse rate would quicken and convictions and tears would return.

CLASS PROCESS

Each book is a semester-long class. The subject matter is explored very thoroughly because all the students are participating in the questioning and answering. You will have the next best thing to being in the classroom. In fact, there will be times in your reading in which you will be in the classroom through imagination.

BENEFITS

Discipleship has been declared by many to be the greatest need in Southern Baptist life today. In my many years of teaching, I have had churches to bus in many of their members to take my classes at Southwestern Seminary. The reason that was given was that it was a very good source for discipleship training. This discipleship training is a step up from Sunday school and other training because *it adds seminary training at the lay level*. Armed with this new discipleship training, the new lay ministers are fulfilling their calls and impacting the Kingdom of God in a very positive way. Pastors are benefiting by having some new lay ministers to help them minister. Churches and society are benefiting by receiving positive help that is theologically sound and practical.

For you, the busy Christian of today, this series is a rare opportunity to actually participate in a seminary classroom to learn from the teacher and your peers in high impact and focused studies that are not available in any other books. The teacher's experience of teaching as a generalist will provide *intercon-*

nected insights and truths that are not available in specialization. The *student interactions* in these books will create a *relevancy* that is unheard of outside the classroom. The quality of the *class dynamics* will lift you, the reader, up into unparalleled densely packed teachings that will greatly improve the *efficiency of your learning*. You owe it to yourself to jump into this series because you can get an education that is the next best thing to actually going to seminary.

In addition to the student interactions recorded in each chapter, the major points that I made which would be the source of the tests given to the classroom students are stated in the text, and the *test questions* are stated at the end of each chapter (class session). The *answers* to those tests are given at the end of the book for you to check yourself. If you seriously want to know that you have accomplished the goals of each chapter and to be able to teach a course like this, answer those questions to the point that you can do so without going back into the chapter itself—i.e. memorize those points and charts.

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INTRODUCTION

Many people treat the Old Testament as yesterday's news. Yes, they still admit it to be God's Word, but they still think of the content as historical accounts of Israel's beginning, life, and dealings with God and neighbors. Brethren, you must not fall into this trap. When God addresses His people and gives instructions or warnings, He is addressing ALL of His people. You are the current recipient of God's instructions and warnings.

Israel and Judah rejected Isaiah's message. They were secure in their own perverted worship because they were immersed in the good life. They were interpreting the good life and their continuous climbing as God's blessings because they were right with Him. God sent Isaiah to tell them that they were wrong. He was not happy with their

compartmentalizing their lives by living the good life while offering their sacrifices in the Temple in their worship rituals as appeasements to God.

Isaiah's message to Israel, Judah, and now to us is and will always be: "Quit focusing on the good life. Your lives belong to Me. I have a job for each of you. If you fail in your jobs that I have assigned each of you, I will fight against you and you will go to certain destruction."

Christian, you have only your short little lifetime to get your assignment done. Are you doing it? This course will show you whether or not you are on path. The course on Evangelism that you took earlier in this series told you how to get on path. Now this course will show you whether or not you are on path.

Chapter 1

THE FALL OF ISRAEL

THE PROPHETIC FUNCTION

The orientation of the prophet is someone who stands with his back to God facing the people so that he can address them on behalf of God. It is just the reverse for a priest. The priest has his back to the people petitioning God on behalf of the people.

Jesus is prophet, priest and king. As king, he stands with the people, commanding them and leading them to put the laws of God into effect as they penetrate the world in order to win people to the Lord and make disciples of them. Each office has a specific function. Jesus has all three offices and all three functions. He has given those offices and functions to the Church. Not all of the offices are given to each Christian, but all of the functions are given to each of us.

Under the New Covenant, there was a change in the offices by subdividing the prophetic office into apostle, pastor, teacher, deacon, and missionary.¹ We fit into this scenario of offices and functions just a little bit differently. We are all now priests and kings in our heavenly defined offices via rebirth.² But we are not all automatically, via our rebirth, in the offices of pastor, teacher, deacon, or missionary. However, we each have all the functions of all three of the divine offices to perform, and we must do all three kinds of service. You are prophet, priest, and king *in your service*. When you get born again into Christianity, you receive your kingship and priesthood office titles. You

see, that is how the priesthood and kingship was conveyed—by birth. But the office of prophet was never conveyed by birth. The Old Testament office of prophet and all of the New Testament subdivisions of the prophetic office are conveyed only by a special calling from God Himself.

Isaiah became a prophet because God chose him and called him to be His prophet. You, on the other hand, when you are reborn, are not a prophet, but you are one of the royal priesthood. All of us, then, are kings and priests, and we are that by our new birth. We fall under the lineage of Jesus Who is our King and High Priest and Who is God's Son selected to be His Spokesman, i.e. prophet and apostle, to us. In summary, we are all priests, we are all kings, but we are not all prophets or apostles. Some men are ordained by God to be office holders in the Church. Those offices are the subdivisions of the prophetic office—pastor, teacher, deacon, and missionary. Concerning one's livelihood, these ordained offices can be vocational, bi-vocational, or volunteer. Livelihood does not make one office more authentic than another. Only God's call affects authenticity of office.

The three offices that are anointed by the Holy Spirit are prophet, priest, and king. Jesus is all three. He alone is anointed for all three offices and performs all three functions in all three areas. He is our King who rules over everything, He is our High Priest who pleads for our ongoing forgiveness, and He is the Prophet Who brought the Good News of salvation to us from God.

Now, we address the prophetic function—please be sure to hear the word *function*. Function is a part of office, but office is not a part of function. Because you are a Christian, you have the prophetic function without

¹ The NT Church has renamed the apostle to missionary in order to confine the writing of Scripture to the original apostles. The missionary performs all the other functions of the apostle with the exception of writing Scripture. The New Testament is closed, not to be added to or subtracted from.

² 1 Pet. 2:9 and Rev. 1:6

having the office. Every one of you now has the prophetic function. It doesn't matter whether you have the gift of prophecy or not, you have the function because of who you are and Whom you follow. This prophetic function is what I want your paper³ to be about. That is why I am giving this introduction. I want you to realize that all of us have the function, but only those whom God has called to the office have, or should have, the office.

We all inherit the offices and the functions of the priesthood and kingship as our birthright in Jesus. Kingship is applied through stewardship. Your will is autonomous. You can do with yourself and your possessions as you choose. The Lord wants us to bring all things under His control according to His Will. One of the things that is under your control is your own body. That means, then, that you are to be a good steward over your body, your wealth, your network, your family, your job, etc. All of these things require a stewardship approach to managing them for benefiting Jesus above all else. You have that function of the king's office to do in all areas of your life.

We are not going to focus on the kingship office and function in this course because this course is about the prophetic function of Isaiah the prophet. If we were studying a king, then we would take a different tact. But since we are studying a prophet, I want you to relate to those lessons that are going to call you to prophetic action. You are going to think, "You know, I need to be doing this ministry. I can see my responsibility to meet today's needs."

³The seminary students were required to develop a 10-page research paper on the relevancy of the Old Testament prophets to today.

We don't want to approach this great prophetic book as a mere history lesson in which we can stand over against Israel and Judah as critics of their behavior. This approach removes the relevance for us today so that we remain in our weakness. We don't want to continue being modern, know-it-all innocents and say, "Look at those sinful people; why didn't they straighten up? What is wrong with them?" Instead, when we look at them, we should be looking into a mirror so that we can see what is wrong with ourselves by seeing the correlations. If I have the prophetic function, maybe I ought to be imitating Isaiah by calling the church, government, family, etc. to repentance.

With the coronation of Saul, God's Kingship was replaced. In God's place, Israel placed a fallible human king. When you have a fallible king who can demand conformance to his will, you need somebody to call his attention to those places where he is erring. There is a need for some checks and balances when the king is leading God's people astray. That is where the prophet comes in, i.e. to call the king to repentance, and get him to lead the people in the right direction. The prophet also has a very important duty to perform with the people themselves, and that is to call their attention to their lifestyles and their ethics.

Billy: Is the Christian able to fill the office of king?

V. Yes, God has given the offices of king and priest to every Christian. In addition to the generic office of king, He can also appoint a Christian to the worldly office as king or president or governor of a geographical entity.

What I want to do in this class is address Isaiah's function and how that function lands on everybody in here. Nobody escapes. I want you to take what you learn in here and

propagate it so that you too will call your people to prophetic action. If you will do that, then we are multiplying and the Kingdom of God is growing stronger. There will be benefits accruing to society just because you are doing your prophetic function. Our society needs it badly.

THE SYRO-EPHRAIMITIC CRISIS

The background and setting for Isaiah is what is called the Syro-Ephraimitic Crisis. You need to know this series of events that God used in His divorce of Israel because of its Baalism idolatry.

1. King Pekah (737-32 B.C.) is the king of Israel. He is in alliance with the king of Syria whose name is Rezin. I want you to get this map firmly implanted in your mind. This is the Mediterranean Sea on

the left, and the Sea of Galilee is in the middle. Down south is the Dead Sea. Judah is the area down around the Dead Sea. Israel is all the area above Judah. And Damascus is this city in southwest Syria at the top of the map.

2. The empire of Assyria is a massive area that includes most of today's Turkey, Iraq, and other contiguous countries north and east of Israel excluding Syria.
3. Syria, however, has formed an alliance with neighboring Israel and they want to strengthen their alliance by adding Judah in their opposition of Assyria. Pekah, in alliance with Rezin, has threatened to attack Judah in an attempt to force Judah to join in their alliance against Assyria.
4. Jotham, the king of Judah, wants to stay independent.
5. Rezin and Pekah attack Judah. That war is found in 2 Kings 15.
6. King Ahaz (735-15 B.C.) assumes the throne in Judah.
 - a. Ahaz is attacked from the north by Pekah and Rezin.
 - b. The Philistines attack him from the west. That is in 2 Chronicles 28.
 - c. Edom attacks from the south (2 Kings 16).

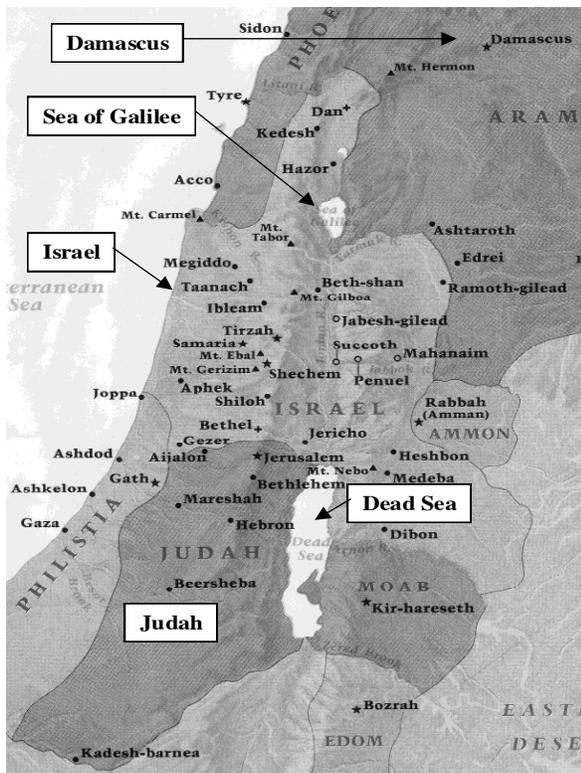


Chart 1.1

Judah is now being hit from 3 compass points. Threatening to conquer all the surrounding nations is the Assyrian Empire that resides to the east of Judah, its 4th compass point. As soon as Ahaz assumed Judah's throne, his world started crumbling. He offers his son as a burnt offering. Now, this is the first of two strange steps. The next step is:

7. Ahaz appeals for help from the Assyrian emperor Tiglath-Pileser (2 Kings 16).

So Ahaz, in order to get out from under the ongoing 3-way attack, asks Tiglath-

Pileser, the greatest of all threats to all of the nations in and around the Holy Land, for help.

How many of you saw the Assyrian museum when they brought it to Fort Worth? Only Travis and Terry? That museum depicted this period of time that we are studying here in this course. They brought all the war implements, the paintings, the reliefs, all the various kinds of idols that were being worshiped. The museum was fascinating because it all related to the history of God's people during Isaiah's time.

Tiglath-Pileser agreed to provide all the help for Judah that was requested by Ahaz. However, he stipulated that Judah had to provide money, horses, slaves and other resources for the venture. So Judah became basically a vassal nation to Assyria.

Part of what we are going to be studying is what Isaiah is preaching in the midst of this Syro-Ephraimitic crisis. The prophet of God is standing up saying, "Depend on God! Don't depend on man." Ahaz is scared, and he concludes that he cannot depend on God alone. He chooses to ally with Assyria against his attackers on three sides.

Sam: He thinks that God needs some help?

V: Yes, it is the same kind of thinking that caused the crowning of Saul as king: "God can't be king; He is not good enough. We need a warrior king like the Philistines have who will go before us and lead us into victorious battle." It was the trading of personal freedoms for the feeling of security, the opposite of faith.

8. Assyria marches on Damascus, the very heart of Syria. Syria falls in 732 B.C. Assyria uses a divide-and-conquer process—first conquer Syria the bigger na-

tion and then wipe out Israel⁴ and put them both under tribute.

9. Shalmaneser succeeds Tiglath-Pileser as the emperor of Assyria (727 B.C.).

10. Hoshea, who was the king of Israel by then, decided to revolt on the occasion of that change of emperor because he saw it as a moment of weakness. Israel was anguishing under the debilitating tribute required by Assyria. So Israel revolts against this gigantic empire on an all-or-nothing gamble.

11. Sargon II succeeded Shalmaneser as emperor and wiped out Israel in 721 B.C.

Assyria's siege of Israel lasted three years. By the end of that period, people were eating each other. It was hell on earth for God's people during that 3-year siege.⁵

Please know that God may allow it again. God's people are under spiritual siege right now. We need to rise up and fight and not call on alliances of the flesh, but call on the Lord to deliver us out of this siege that we are in. Don't be fooled just because your life is satisfactory right now. Don't be fooled. All hell is breaking loose on you.

JUDAH AFTER THE FALL OF ISRAEL

Yes, Judah avoided an all-out war with Israel and Syria. In doing so, Judah jumped out of the frying pan into the fire because it is now going to have a bout with Assyria. The following nine steps describe it. Please note that all of this background sets the stage for

⁴God calls Israel Ephraim sometimes and Samaria sometimes. He also calls Judah Israel sometimes after the annihilation of the northern kingdom.

⁵ The destruction of Israel was one of totality. At this point, the northern kingdom of Israel ceased to exist as the northern kingdom of God's two kingdoms, Israel and Judah. From this point on, the area that Israel occupied will be called sometimes Samaria and sometimes Ephraim.

our studying the book of Isaiah. If you can get this background information firmly in your mind, it will give you a good context and framework for our study.

1. King Hezekiah of Judah (715-687 B.C.) was urged to join Egypt and Philistia in the Ashdod rebellion against Assyria of 713 B.C.

Philistia, the small land of the Philistines, is on the coast of the Mediterranean just west of Judah. Egypt controls everything south of Philistia. The Egypt-Philistia alliance wants Judah to join with them to push back the Assyrian empire from its growing encroachment.

When Assyria conquered Israel, they transplanted the artisans and craftsmen to the empire as slaves. Then, they transplanted the dregs of Assyria to Samaria in their place. The resulting mixture of Assyrian and Samaritan dregs intermarry and produce the despised Samaritans. That is why the Samaritans all through the New Testament are looked down upon and avoided because they are a mix between the Assyrian pagans and the idolatrous people of God whom God divorced. Judah, in New Testament times, was separated from Galilee of northern Israel by Samaria. The Judeans would not even go through the area occupied by the Samaritans. They would circle around Samaria in order to get to Galilee in order to not be soiled by just passing through that unclean place.

2. Isaiah counseled against joining the revolt.

By going naked for three years, Isaiah was desperately trying to communicate his message. Now you imagine yourself trying to communicate something and be willing to go naked for three years. He was signaling that nakedness would happen to the people of God if they joined the alliance. Assyria would come in as a punishment to you, and you will

be led away naked into slavery. His warning sermon was both preached and also acted out.

3. Judah heeded Isaiah's warnings and escaped destruction when Sargon crushed the Ashdod Rebellion in 711 B.C.
4. Sennacherib (705-681 B. C.) succeeded Sargon as king of Assyria.
5. Hezekiah thought this would be a good time to revolt, so he joined with Egypt in another revolt.

Hezekiah followed the ancient pattern by assuming that a change of kings was the perfect occasion for revolt because the change made the ruling empire vulnerable. Judah dug the water tunnel in preparation for the anticipated war (2 Kings 20 and 2 Chronicles 32).

6. Isaiah counseled against the revolt because an alliance with foreign powers was dependence on the arm of flesh rather than on God.
7. Assyria's Sennacherib conquered many cities of Judah in its march to Jerusalem. He had Hezekiah shut up like a bird in a cage in preparation for a siege.
8. Sennacherib surrounded Jerusalem and demanded surrender.

As far as you could see in any direction from Jerusalem were enemy encampments (2 Kings 18.)

9. Isaiah counseled Hezekiah to wait and depend on God for salvation. This action required a faith that was in spite of the seeming impossibility of surviving.

Hezekiah chose to depend on God, and that night 185,000 Assyrian warriors died mysteriously. When you ally with the Lord, 185,000 are killed (snap)—just like that, and the siege is broken.

THE THREE MAJOR DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK

1. Chapters one through 39 describe the decline of Israel and Judah.
2. Chapters 40 through 55 describe the Babylonian Exile of Judah.
3. Chapters 56 through 66 describe eschatological times for the people of God.

These three divisions have brought in various theories about the authorship of Isaiah. In A. D. 1167 Rabbi Ibn Ezra denied that Isaiah wrote the last part of this book because of the difference in the end of the book. Chapters 40 through 66 describe something that does not have anything to do with Assyria. It has to do with new empires that have not been born yet and a time far into the future, far past the time of the prophet Isaiah. One of those new empires is the Babylonian empire. The Babylonian empire conquers Assyria and occupies a larger land area of which Assyria was just a part. The Babylonian empire becomes a huge empire to incorporate the entire known world of that time. The Babylonian empire did not exist during Isaiah's time, but here is Isaiah foretelling the Babylonian Exile of Judah.

Jack: God told him.

V: That's right! Because he is a prophet of God, he is hearing the Word from God, he is facing the people, and God is communicating to them through His prophet.

By the 18th century, a German scholar, Bernard Duhm, developed the theory for a *deutero* Isaiah. In this theory, an unknown someone added the later history to the book of Isaiah. However, the theories didn't stop there!

In the 19th Century some more Germans thought maybe there might be three Isaiahs. So you have *trito* Isaiah. Some professors today refer to 1st Isaiah, 2nd Isaiah, and 3rd

Isaiah as if there were three authors of the book of Isaiah.

In the 20th Century, the Scholars from the Form Criticism⁶ movement came along and accentuated the fact that the last half of the book is a different form from the first half and thus concluded that there must have been more than one author.

EVIDENCE FOR ISAIAH'S AUTHORSHIP

1. The whole book is ascribed to Isaiah in 180 B.C. by Ben Sirach, a Jewish scribe who was an apocryphal author and scholar of the books of Law and Wisdom.
2. The Dead Sea Scrolls have no break between Chapters 39 and 40.
3. There are 9 New Testament passages from the second half of the book attributed to Isaiah.

The following passages in the New Testament quote passages from the second half of the book and attribute them to Isaiah. I am going to list them for you, but you don't have to give them back to me. You might need them in your ministries:

John 12:38-41 (quotes both Isaiah 53:1 and Isaiah 6:10 and attributes both to Isaiah). In this quote, John attributes something in the latter part of the book and something in the first part of the book to Isaiah.

Matthew 3:3 quotes Isaiah 40:3.

Matthew 8:17 quotes Isaiah 53:4.

Matthew 12:17 quotes from Isaiah 42:1-4.

⁶ Form Criticism is a style that is being used now by biblical critics to determine who wrote the books. So if Isaiah's form of writing changes within the book, then the form critics say that Isaiah couldn't have written both parts because they are not alike in form. Likewise, if the Apostle Paul wrote a letter here, and another letter there of a different form, then they would conclude that Paul didn't write them both.

Luke 3:4 quotes from Isaiah 40:3-5.

John 1:23 quotes from Isaiah 40:3.

John 12:38 has Jesus quoting Isaiah 53:1.

There may be others, but I am stopping right here.

4. Similarity in vocabulary.
5. It is unlikely that the author of chapters 40 through 66 could remain unknown.
6. Isaiah 1:1 claims authorship for the whole book.
7. Isaiah 36-39 serves as a bridge to the second part.

Sue: What does it mean when you say that the Dead Sea Scrolls had no break between chapters 39 and 40?

V: Okay, the book breaks according to the *deutero* authorship theory at chapter 40. But there is no break there. If there were another book that was written after the fact, then the Isaiah scroll would have ended after chapter 39 for the ancient book. The second part of the book would have been written well after the Babylonian exile, and then the two joined together sometime in the future. But there was no break; the complete scroll (chapters 1-66) was found.

Class, I want to get started on the message of the book. We are going to go at this with the three divisions that we had a while ago.

THE SIX LESSONS OF DIVISION #1

1. *Morality*

Holiness is a doctrine that Isaiah is going to be proclaiming. When you are dealing with God's Holiness, it means His absolute otherness. He is so qualitatively distinct from us that holiness is what is used to describe that. In His otherness, God is good, and there is no sin in anything that He does. Also God, in His Holiness, is separated from all of

creation's constraints in order to do nothing outside of His Own Purposes. His Holiness means that God is without sin and dedicated to His Own perfect Will. Mankind, however, is sunk down in its human, frail, weak, sinful lives dedicated to doing its own things. There is such a qualitative distinction between God and man that for man to become holy, it must be imputed to us. When you get born again, you become holy people, but you are still susceptible to your old sin nature in your behavior.

By God's imputing His Holiness to you, He is cleansing you of your sins and transferring you to another category. He wants you to be like Him, i.e. to be separated from the natural creation into an other-worldly clean creation that is entirely dedicated to His exclusive use. That otherness is where the word church came from. The word church, *ecclesia*, is formed from two words, *ek* is out of and *caleo* is to call. To call out of means to be moved into God's otherness or to be made holy.

There are two attributes that make up the doctrine of holiness. Cleansed from sin and separated unto God's use are those two attributes of holiness. God's people are a holy people. Their beings have been cleansed from all sin and they have been called out of natural creation to be set over in a new divine creation that is dedicated for God's purposes.

If you are holy, then you ought to avoid sin and live in obedience to God. Morality is incumbent upon you. That incumbent morality, is associated with, and correlates directly with your ontological holiness (holiness of being) that is imputed to you. Even though you are a frail person still possessing an old sin nature and living in a world full of sinful temptations, you are to resist them because you are cleansed by God and dedicated by Him to His Own exclusive use. So your morality/ethics/behavior, then, should change to match who you are on the

inside. Who you are on the inside is an imputed perfect holiness from God Himself.

Now hypocrisy comes at the point where your actions belie your ontology. Every one of you is absolutely holy because if you aren't holy, you are not going to heaven. That perfect holiness that is requisite for heaven is an imputed holiness from God. However, we don't always act like it. That is why the world says that we are a bunch of hypocrites, and they are right! We need to get our actions lined up with who we are. When you do that, you are doing what Isaiah is going to be preaching about. So, the first value of holiness is God's morality.

2. *Pride*

God's judgment is on pride. The pride that Isaiah points out is Judah's professional sacrifices to satisfy the externals of religion. The Judeans are going through the motions of making their sacrifices. They go to the temple, sacrifice to the Lord, and worship. They are very consistent in their rituals. They are involved in real self-denying to get in place to camp out within a Sabbath-day's journey of the Temple. On the Sabbath day, they worship and then make another Sabbath-day's journey to camp out until the next day when they can really resume their journey back home without Sabbath Day restrictions. You see, these people are getting after their ritualistic and legalistic religion. Isaiah observes this behavior and says, "God is going to judge your pride."

How is this pride? The externals of religion and sacrifice—how is that pride? Why would Isaiah hammer on that and call that pride?

Sam: It is done for show, not from the heart.

Tom: The sacrifice that God wants is a broken and contrite spirit.

Perry: The Scripture says something about our words being close to God while our hearts are far away.

V: They draw close to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.⁷ All of your comments are true, but how is that pride?

Sam: Well it is putting on a front or an act.

Big Dog⁸: I don't know if it is the same time period but in Jeremiah the Jews were saying "Temple of the Lord, Temple of the Lord, Temple of the Lord" when they went to worship, and they were proud of their astute worship within God's holy Temple.

V: Okay, that is a good point.

Freddy: I am thinking it was that they were not humble in their worship. They did not worship the Lord in their ethical behavior, but with their lips. They were not putting themselves under God's leadership

V: That is a very good point, Freddy, and it certainly deals with pride.

Trouble: I think they fully believed that what they were doing was pleasing in God's sight, and they had it all figured out and had a system going that was fully pleasing in God's sight, and they were sold out that this way was right. But it was right in their own eyes. They were not recognizing that God is in control instead of themselves and their ways.

V: That is a very good point too, Trouble.

Mary: They were worshipping their rituals rather than worshipping God.

V: Okay, that is good, Mary, and it is getting to Judah's subtle idolatry.

⁷Matthew 15:8.

⁸Big Dog was an ex-con. All ex-cons were sent to Dr. Vinson's classes as a kind of probationary period. Big Dog got his name when he announced to the class that the big dog had arrived when Dr. Vinson walked in.

Mr. Gulley: I would say that it was ritualistic rule keeping.

V: Okay, that is good. You guys are hitting all around it.

Terry: I think it had a lot to do with their placement of God instead of the placement of themselves. They were going through the motions, and they really weren't bad motions, but I think they were bringing God down to a level that they can understand and be comfortable with rather than dealing with His Otherness.

V: That is a very good point. Basically, pride is the culprit when worship rituals are a substitute for obedience. It is pride when we assert our own wills in our lives and think that God is pleased with our sacrificial worship.

Now how does Judah's pride correlate with the church of today?

Tony: Our times of worship are set by tradition. Our attendance and tithes make our pastors happy and fulfill our traditional requirements from God.

V: That is a good point.

Max⁹: Jesus said, where two or three or gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them. That means when we gather in any place for worship and for praise, we are in the presence of Almighty God, and we are standing on holy ground. We have come to the point of being so casual that the gathering means nothing. We have made God a casual God to the point that He is, in a sense, nothing more than our buddy. There is no reverence, awe, or fear of God. We are comfortable in our worship.

Terry: The first question we need to ask ourselves, "Are we really gathered together for worship, is our heart in the right place, are

we there to worship Him? Some of our gatherings are out of whack. We can gather all we want to, and He is not there.

Mr. Gulley: We worship the day, the building, and our rituals rather than the Person in His Sovereign Otherness.

V: Yes!

Helen: We spend a few hours per week in our worship times in church. But then we leave to enjoy the world. We live worldly except for our little bit of the time for our rituals of worship.

V: Okay class, you all have hit right on the correlating issues of worship, but I want to focus on pride. God is going to judge Israel on pride.

Helen: I take care of my responsibilities. I go to church every Sunday! That elevates me.

V: Yes, you have elevated yourself because you have done your thing. Now Isaiah is dropping a hammer on this pride concept! God says to Judah, "I want a holy life out of you. I don't want all these externals. I want obedience above sacrifice!"

Ray: We are the church. Christ is coming back for us. He is not coming after a church built with hands. He wants holiness in our hearts that will result in change in our lives.

V: That's right!

James: I have seen churches become social clubs!

V: Social clubs?

James: Yes, when true worship of God dies away, the social activities will keep it going.

V: You are right. I know of one of those too right here in Fort Worth.

The Definition of Pride

⁹Max is a shortened name for Maximum Trouble that he earned from his comments and questions in another course.

Pride takes away from holiness. Holiness is composed of two factors: moral cleanness and dedicated for God's sole use. When holiness is reduced to moral cleanness alone, then the use of ourselves has moved away from God and to another. When that other is ourselves, the issue is pride. That is the same thing that Lucifer did when he thought to exalt his throne up as high as God's. He said, "I will."

Pride is the issue when we think that "we will" live our lives in pursuit of the things that we want and reduce holiness to just the moral

cleanness factor. Class, we have to submit our wills to the Lord. We can't just submit in the moral, ethical actions. Our lives belong to Him. We must allow Him to determine our pursuits, vocations, mates, ministries and everything in life. When we humbly submit our wills to Him in every area of life in the full meaning of holiness, then, and only then is our pride defeated. Defeating our own wills is our battle to win or lose. God will not fight this battle for us. We must fight it. It is a 24/7 continuous battle, and it is the most difficult battle of life.

Chapter Questions

1. Contrast the offices of prophet and priest.
2. What is holiness?
3. Describe the Syro-Ephraimitic Crisis.
4. What is the early history of Judah after the fall of Israel?
5. What are the three divisions of the book of Isaiah?

Chapter 2

THE SEVEN ORACLES OF REDEMPTION

In the previous chapter we began to list the lessons that we will be learning from Isaiah's first division. The first two have already been listed as morality and pride. Now we will continue with the list.

3. **Philosophy of History** (Note: Assyria is used as the rod of God.)
4. **Faith in God instead of political alliances.**
5. **The remnant will be purged but not annihilated.**
6. **The personal Messiah is foretold.**

Sam: Is it important that we use these words or can we say this in our own words?

V: Your own words will be fine.

In this course, we are going to dig into these lessons contained in the three divisions of the book.

THE LESSONS IN DIVISION #2 (ISAIAH 40-55)

1. **Israel's God is central and unique.**
2. **Concerning eschatology, there is an intense longing and expectation.**
3. **The four suffering servant passages.**

While I am thinking about it, I want to insert an aside about suffering. Under suffering by God's people, I want to give you the steps that we go through in our attempt to understand suffering. I want you to write this down.

- a. All sufferers were sinners.
- b. Some sufferers were saints.
- c. Some sufferers were saviors.
- d. All saviors are sufferers. (Be sure to lock in on this.)

Stu: Will this include the *kenosis*?

V: Yes, but I don't want to stop right here to explain these steps and where the *kenosis* comes in. In a future class we will study how to get to a right understanding of our suffering and how the *kenosis* connects to the suffering for disciples. You guests will just have to keep coming to class in order to get the answers on suffering.¹

THE LESSONS IN DIVISION #3 (ISAIAH 56-66)

We have two lessons in this division of the book of Isaiah.

1. A renewed interest in worship.
2. Sin and judgment issues into the new heaven and earth.

Now notice how division #1 is the decline of Israel. Division #2 is the Assyrian captivity of Israel in which God's judgment is brought down upon them. For this judgment, God uses Assyria as His rod of discipline. Notice that Assyria is a pagan, evil empire, but God is going to use it to whip his child. That is not to say that the rod is okay or good.

The rod of discipline used by God can be evil in its own right. You need to see this principle in your own Christian pilgrimages. God can use someone very evil to bring discipline upon you, and that is what He did to His child Israel by using Assyria as His rod. A century or so later, He allows Judah to be disciplined by the Babylonian empire. The Babylonian captivity is a total captivity, and it serves as a foretaste of the captivity of the

¹ Students often brought family members and church members to classes with them. I was not resistant to having guests like some professors. I encouraged it because I wanted to get the lessons out and into practice. Each guest presented another opportunity to expand God's Kingdom.

church that is described in the Book of Revelation.

The second lesson of the third division of Isaiah depicts Judah's coming back out of captivity for a new start. That parallels, you see, the coming out of judgment, i.e. out of sin and judgment comes the new heaven and the new earth. The layout of Isaiah is a prophecy of what we are going to go through.

We need to make sure we are qualified to be the remnant. The remnant in these last days will be suffering because we have chosen to follow Jesus as loving, missionary slaves. The followers of Jesus will suffer like Jesus. And if you follow close to the Lord in His path, you will suffer to the extreme.

This is the message of Isaiah in an overarching and very broad way. Now, we are going to start getting into the book at its beginning.

THE SEVEN ORACLES OF ISAIAH'S VISION IN CHAPTER 1

Open your Bibles to chapter 1 to the seven oracles. You must be able to list the seven oracles in future tests.

1:1 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, [and] Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

There is a fifth king that we are going to list later on when we get to that part. But here are the four kings during Isaiah's ministry. He will die under the fifth king, but he didn't list that one here.

Oracle 1: Covenant Lawsuit. Isaiah 1:2-3

The covenant lawsuit is easily missed if you look at the Old Testament as a typical historical account. Typically, New Testament saints look at an Old Testament account and think: "Why did they do that? Why didn't they understand?" Looking at only the

historical problems of Israel becomes a trap in which we exempt ourselves from the relevance of the judgment of God's Word for us. This book is not just for the Old Testament people. The Old Testament is God's Word that applies to you right now, right here in this very day.

When we are standing over here looking at the judgment of Israel, we are missing the application of the Old Testament. So what I want us to do now is to assume the position of these people in Judah, who received the Words of Isaiah. Then once you can do that, then you take hold of those Words, and come into the present time and apply them right now.

This covenant lawsuit is not just to the citizens of Judah. It is to us too because we are included in Judah through Jesus. Now, when you start thinking about the relevance of this lawsuit for us, then it is going to start pricking your heart because this is some serious stuff right here. Let's take a look at it.

Isaiah

1:2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

1:3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: [but] Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

Now here is an indictment brought by God on His children—His children. **That is who you are—His children!** And so when He says that Israel, the people that He brought up, has rebelled against Him, He is talking about Israel in its historical setting and also the Church in our historical setting. You, whom He has brought up, have rebelled against Him. He says that the ox and the mule know more about what their owner is like than you do. That is our indictment, folks.

Oracle 2: Divine Judgment. Isaiah 1:4-9

The second oracle on divine judgment is sure to come against us. All you have to do is just open to the book of Revelation, and see the judgment that is in store for the Church under Antichrist.

Isaiah

1:4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

1:5 Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

1:6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head [there is] no soundness in it; [but] wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

1:7 Your country [is] desolate, your cities [are] burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and [it is] desolate, as overthrown by strangers.

1:8 And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

1:9 Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, [and] we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

There is a remnant, and that is what I want you to be—that remnant. Now there is going to be a purging of all candidates for the remnant. Then there is going to be continued purging for the members of the remnant. Even if you have your act together, you are going to be purged. The Church is sick, and we are sick. Some of you are not as sick as the average saint, but you are going to suffer under the sins of the saints of God for a long time, folks. It is already here and intensifying. You are already suffering. Many of you are wondering, “**Why isn’t**

there any justice? Why does the Church adopt political correctness? Why does the Church elect such terrible politicians? Why does the Church promote racial unrest and class warfare? Why does the Church focus on money and trade its prophetic ministry for tax exemption?”

Well, it is because that is the suffering from the judgment that is coming down from God, and it is coming upon the just and the unjust. The unjust will fall under the weight of it, and the just will be purged by it. This purging stuff is no fun.

Oracle 3: Religion without Morality is Worthless. Isaiah 1:10-17

Religion without morality is worthless because it is worship without obedience. In this kind of religion, there is no fear of God. God is talking to us right here. He says . . .

Isaiah

1:10 Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; . . .

I don’t know about you guys, but that is like a knife in the gut because He is talking to His Own children.

. . . give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

1:11 To what purpose [is] the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

1:12 When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?

1:13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; [it is] iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

1:14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear [them].

1:15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you:

yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

1:16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

1:17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

This indictment actually includes every living human being in the nation. Sad to say, it includes every living human being in the Church today. You mark it down. If you leave from here escaping this indictment, then you are in the most trouble of all. You need to hear this. Every one of us is being called to repentance. Isaiah is the person God chose to issue the call to repentance through, and he himself is going to be called to repentance. I'm being called to repentance. You are being called to repentance. There are none behaving righteously.

Our righteousness is of our persons because we have an imputed righteousness that is given by Jesus. Your righteousness is a gift to you, but your behavior is your gift back. There is where the problem lies, and when we mess up over and over again, and we excuse it because we are so much more clean than that guy standing over there, then we are doing like Isaiah did, and you are going to see what happens to him. But even the cleanest, even the most upright citizen of the Church today is being called to repentance.

Now I want to try an exercise at this point. I want you to look at this passage—10 through 17. Then, I want you to describe God to me as I call your names.

Helen: He is tired of empty offerings.

Sam: He is demanding holiness of us.

Stu: He is tired and weary.

Linda: He is tired and has had enough of our behavior.

Mr. Gulley: He is tired of being misunderstood.

Terry: He is tired of substitution.

Jack: He does not like us to substitute our religion for our action—ritual vs. godly behavior.

Lewis: He wants an open and absolutely honest relationship.

Freddy² By hiding His Eyes, He removes His protection. He might allow a wreck, an accident, or trouble in our lives.

Larry: He's tired of lip service.

Max: He is an absolute God; He is the same yesterday, today and forever. The only sacrifice that He wants from us is a broken and contrite heart. We have a misunderstanding of prayer. It says in His Word over and over that when we disobey, He does not hear our prayers. He is extremely disappointed because we know what is expected, but we don't do it.

Billy: Along that same line it says, "Your hands are full of blood." I think that means not only murder but also the blood of the lost that most Christians are afraid to even approach.

Raymond: We are playing religion, and He is letting us know that judgment is going to come on us.

Solomon: God wants us to get out of where we are. He is calling us to repentance from our bad state. If we heed his call, we can get out of it.

Buck: He is tired of our not listening.

Larry: Dull of hearing.

V. Dull of hearing connects up with Hebrews at this point!

² Mr. Gulley and Freddy commuted to these classes from Waco.

Brandon: It's making us look at Revelation where it says you have a reputation that you are alive, but you are dead.

Mary: And He is tired of us going through the rituals of sacrificing and attending church services regularly when we continue to live in sin.

V: Amen. You see, I believe that there is a salving of the conscience when we go to church, and we get our goose bumps, and then we leave feeling all cleaned up. That cyclical cleansing frees us up to do another week's worth of just living like hell. We cannot excuse our actions by substituting our church attendance and our tithing and our Sunday school and all the "attaboys" that you get through all of our worship rituals. Our worship is not going to stand in very good stead when we don't walk our paths of sanctification.

Mr. Gulley: He is tired of us being in our own little trench.

V: Amen! Yeah! I can tell that you have been in the Hebrews class. I am going to put a plus (+) on your C. (smile, Mr. Gulley is an A student.)

Terry: I told him to say that.

V: He has earned his plus, but you don't get one, Terry, on your **D!** (laughter)

We've looked at God. Now let's see what He wants us to do and what He wants us not to do.

Jackie: Hear the Word.

Bob: Live the Word.

V: Okay, let's combine those to heed the Word of God.

Jackie: Wash ourselves, make ourselves clean.

Trouble: Some of our churches preach grace and love and all of that, but He says, "Seek judgment."

Brandon: Put away evil.

Mark: Accept responsibility.

Max: Responsibility is too hard; don't put that on the board (laughter).

John: Point out the wrong doings.

Billy: Quit vain oblations, rituals and sacrifices.

Pete: Condemn homosexuality.

Helen: Relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widows.

Jerry: Learn to do good.

Frank: Deny self.

Tom: Know the holiness of God.

Larry: Endure no iniquity in the solemn assembly.

Celia: Stop sinful worship.

V: Can you get the picture of what God is pointing out? The Jews and we are a people that have majored on worshipping, sacrifice, ritual, and the solemn assembly. They/we are doing everything that you would think a holy person would be doing. But they/we are not applying it to our ethics and ministries; they/we are not living it out. They/we are doing our sanctification in the Temple. They/we all are seemingly holy when we are in the Temple. But then the Temple service ends, and they/we go out to live normal, self-directed, good lives.

Now I want you to hear what I am fixing to say. Israel was living normal lives of a pseudo-holiness that would fool our eyes because we are living the same kind of lives too. We are not pursuing evil per se. We are just pursuing our careers and dreams just like Israel was doing. However, Israel was not thieving and murdering, homo-ing, sex changing, aborting, divorcing, and that kind of thing like we are.

Israel was doing something that has the appearance of holiness as they sought to live the good life. They were pursuing fame and fortune while maintaining a high standard of worshipping in the Temple. And God says, “Your hands are full of blood,” but they haven’t killed anybody.

So, what are our hands like? What if He says to us, “When you get down on your knees, and you pray to Me, I turn my back on you.” So what does He do with us when we are being nice people and we go to church and tithe, and then we come out and we pursue our careers? Do you know what holiness means? Holiness means to be a *cleansed vessel* that is *set aside for God’s sole use*. If God really means that you have been set aside for His exclusive use, then you don’t have a career!

You all belong to God. To be a holy man means that you are a slave to be used as the master so desires. You have no rights, you have no life, and you have no say in the whole deal because you have been bought with a price.

When you were bought with the price that He paid, He took you out of the world’s circle that you were in, and he put you into a whole new circle which is called the “called out ones,” the *ecclesia*, the church. That is what the church is—it’s you! who have been purchased with a price and moved out of one community into another community, the community of God’s slaves. When that happens, you see, you are to be used by Him at His beckoning, and used in any method that He chooses, and for any purpose which He desires because you are not your own any more.

Now, do you want to see what it is like to be like these Judeans whom Isaiah is addressing? All you have to do is take charge of your own life and live the good life. Be a good citizen, build a church and worship with all the other saints. Don’t murder, don’t steal,

be upstanding while doing your own thing, and you fall under this condemnation. And the blood is on your hands because, church, you are showing the world the road to hell.

If you want to show the world the road to heaven, be the slave that you are supposed to be. If you will do that, your behavior will change; your attitudes will change because you have no rights, you don’t own the clothes that are on your body. You don’t even own your body! You have no say in this deal except, “Yes Lord.” But when we begin to compartmentalize by giving God His little worship time on Sunday, giving our little offering in the plate, singing, and getting all goose bumpy, and loving and hugging everybody until we leave, then we begin to act out of our home compartment. We act out of our father and husband compartments until they get uncomfortable. Then we leave there and go to operate out of our work and play compartments. In other words, we do our own things.

Instead of Jesus being our life’s purpose, our careers and dreams of the good life become our life’s purpose. We use compartmentalization to achieve this purpose. Instead of a life integrated around and in Jesus, we compartmentalize religion into a minor compartment so that we can invest our lives into things that are more important to us.

God is saying, “Hear me, you rulers of Sodom.” God is speaking to your kingship. What do you rule over if not an environment as vile as Sodom? You are kings and priests. So, God is pointing out what His people have become kings and priests of?

I hear what God is saying. When I look at my life, I come up so far short that I hardly move the needle.

Isaiah preaches to Judah saying, “You rulers of Sodom,” and they ignore him because they do not think that the description applies to them. As has always happened, the

people will try to stop the message by getting rid of the prophet. It will happen to you too. Some of you will preach Isaiah to God's people, and they will exempt themselves by claiming that the message applies to only the Jews of history. Instead of seeing their own problem, they will accuse you of being the problem. The only time your job is not in jeopardy is when you stand over with your people in their perceived innocence and you say, "Those people of Judah were rulers of Sodom; the blood is on their hands. Our hands are clean."

But if you are going to agree with God and follow the Lord, you are going to preach what He tells you. You are going to agree with Him Who calls us liars when we say that we are without sin. God's people are rulers of Sodom because we have let our land become Sodom. Second Chronicles 7:14 declares that the health of our land is in His people's hands. The prophet's function is to stand against the flow and preach repentance, not political correctness. Our preachers are afraid to fulfill this duty. Thus, our land has become Sodom. It is already tough to preach God's pure Word, but it is going to get tougher.

God tells His people what to do in this passage. Our sins are twofold, i.e. commission and omission. For the sins of commission, the answer is to repent by stopping the doing of them. But for the sins of omission, the answer is to repent by starting to do them. Preachers, if you are committing sins, stop it. If you are not preaching God's Word (all of it), start it.

Most Southern Baptists have done a pretty good job of stopping the sins of commission. Or at least we have done so in the past. But concerning the sins of omission, we are disobeying New Testament sanctification by choosing paths of our personal preferences. You go to church, and you bask in all of the glory of worship, and hear the sermon on stopping the sins of commission. The most

that you are accomplishing is solving the sins of commission.

Class, hear this: when you walk out the door, when you leave this classroom tonight, your sins of omission are going to start.

Oracle 4: *Forgiveness and Blessing is Available.* Isaiah 1:18-20

Now as bad as God's people have acted, forgiveness and blessing are still available. God promised it to Israel and to us. Salvation, restoration, and even improvement via blessings in every area of life are available for everyone who will but **repent** and **obey**.

Isaiah

1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

1:19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

1:20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken [it].

In the great tribulation that is just around the corner, there is going to be a devouring by the sword, and the saints are going to be executed, and the numbers are going to be so large that they cannot be counted. The mode of execution is going to be chopping the head off. He is saying right now to the church, right here, just like he said to Judah, "If you will be obedient, you will eat the good of the land, but if you rebel, you'll be devoured by the sword."

Now the church is in rebellion. YOU are in rebellion. We are like a train that cannot be stopped. We are running down where the track of rebellion goes. We keep ignoring the switches that turn off toward forgiveness and blessing. No, we are going to go to the end of the track of rebellion, and the end of it is a place of devouring by the sword. It is going to happen because God said it is going to happen.

Will you take one of the offered switches toward holiness in its divine meaning? Holiness for God's people is of **person and works**. The personhood must become a clean vessel (provided by forgiveness), and the works must be complete surrender to God's sole use in His divine purposes (results in blessing).

Oracle 5: Moral Decay of God's People.

Isaiah 1:21-23

The moral decay of God's people is expressed to the point of calling God's people a harlot.

Isaiah

1:21 How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.

1:22 Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water:

1:23 Thy princes [are] rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.

Turn with me to Jeremiah 2-3, God calls His people in Judah a harlot 4 times and accuses them one-time of whoredoms.

Jeremiah

2:20 For of old time I have broken thy yoke, [and] burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the **harlot**.

Jeremiah

3:1 They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the **harlot** with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah

3:2 Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lien with. In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness;

and thou hast polluted the land with thy **whoredoms** and with thy wickedness.

Jeremiah

3:6 The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen [that] which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the **harlot**.

Jeremiah

3:8 And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the **harlot** also.

Judah has lived to this point over a century after the destruction of Israel. Judah knows God's indictment of Israel and how Israel refused to switch off of the track that it was on. Judah knows full well that God's discipline for idolatry is something to be feared to the highest degree. Now Judah is on the same track that Israel rode to total destruction and annihilation. Jeremiah is God's last resort for warning Judah to take the switch to forgiveness and blessing that Israel ignored.

Judah, the remnant of God's children, lasted nearly 150 years longer than Israel. Israel was destroyed by Assyria. Judah lasted through all of that crisis but did not learn a thing about fearing God. Judah was captured by Babylonia for the same cause—idolatry. Judah would never have gone into captivity if she had learned from Israel.

God considered Judah even more treacherous than Israel. Why? because Israel was open with her adultery. Judah did all the prescribed worship, and they lived holy lives in men's eyes. Oh, they were clean because they did it right! But God said they were harlots because their idolatry was hidden within their prescribed worship. They idolized a good thing—the Temple.

God said that He issued Israel a bill of divorce. Thus, Israel went completely out of existence. All that God had left was Judah, the Southern Kingdom. And Judah lasted over a century after learning about, but not avoiding, the unmistakable price of harlotry.

Now, church, what have you learned? You have seen Israel be wiped off the face of the earth. You've seen Judah pretend to be holy and be captured by Babylon. You have seen the church start off as a pure bride just like He described Israel here where justice was lodged in it, and righteousness lived therein. You have seen all that! Then you've seen the church become apostate just like Israel and go into captivity during the Dark Ages in which the replacement of God's Word was made by papal dictates.

The Reformers came along and enlightened the church to Scripture that freed it from papal strangulation, and the church came out of the religious Dark Ages just like Judah did when Isaiah preached after Israel's divorce. Judah's king heard Isaiah and said "Yes, I will align with God," and God spared them.

You are riding the wave of the Protestant Reformation. Where has the truth gone in our current wave? To where did all of the doing of the Truth go? Are we again majoring on the solemn assemblies? or on the worship time, and on the do-nots? We are letting go of the Lord's commission to obey Him in His Great Commission. What is required of a slave? Does he worship God and then do his own work, or does he worship God and do God's work? Holiness means that you are a clean vessel that is dedicated to God's sole use. Your very next breath belongs to God. And so when you begin to take a career and you displace God, and you want to give him a tip, a little offering, go to church and appease Him and then have your life the way you want it, that is harlotry, folks.

Now, you want to see where this harlotry is going? Turn with me to Revelation 17.

Revelation

17:1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

17:2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

You see what is happening to the world today? It is being intoxicated by the behavior of the church. The church doesn't even appear holy any more, and so as a result there is no enticement for the world to turn from wickedness. There is no enticement for the world to turn to God. Why? so that they can become like us? Why should they do that? They are already better than the hypocritical, self-ruled, pleasure-seeking, sin-soaked bunch like us.

Revelation

17:3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

17:4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

This lady is decked out in finery with all the gold and silver, and all she has to do to have all of that is to get up on the beast and ride it, and the beast then determines where she is going to go. Because, you see, she has no bridle upon this beast. The beast determines the woman's path through the good life.

Who is directing your life? Is God directing your life through self-denial, cross bearing following of Jesus? Do you do what he says, or do you do what you want to do? It could be a very good thing that you are doing. It

can be worshipping, it can be the clean life, and you can be a wonderful, nice person. But are you following Jesus or are you asking Jesus to follow you and bless you where you go: “Oh, God, we are launching out on a new ministry. Please bless our ministry! Bless our ministry and us as we build this church addition.” Meanwhile, God is saying: “Come with me, follow me. I’m going over here instead of there and I want you to come with me to do what I say.” And we respond, “Oh, no, suffering and sacrifice cannot be Your Will. Blessing and success is the proof of Your Love. We want to live the successful good life of ministry. God, please come and bless us!”

The remnant of the last days is called the faithful city. The harlot is the Church that is infected with Mystery Babylon. Babylon or the wicked city connotes the unsaved people who are immersed in self-centeredness. Mystery Babylon is not the Church. It is the world’s system of evil self-centeredness. Thus the evil system of Mystery Babylon, when adopted by the Church, is the lukewarm Christians who have adopted at most the clean vessel factor of holiness.

So, on the one hand is the holy city, and on the other, the wicked city. Common to both is Mystery Babylon. That portion of the holy city that is infected with Mystery Babylon is called the harlot because she is Christ’s bride after all. When Scripture addresses Babylon, it could be referring either to the harlot or to the lost people of the world. When addressed to the harlot, we are being called to turn to God in righteous obedience. Are we going to reject God along with the wicked city?

Persons of both cities are all mingled together. Who will the scorching heat afflict? Now because of the wicked ones mingled together with the holy ones, the heat is going to rain down on all of us. And God says, “And when I rain down the heat, those who

repent are going to receive a blessing from me; those who don’t are going to be devoured by the sword because if I used the sword of Assyria and Babylon to devour my children of old, don’t think I am just going to swoon over you. I am no respecter of persons. No, you are going to be devoured too, because I am the same today as I was yesterday.”

It’s coming! But Christians can stave it off if we will repent of all our sins of both commission and omission and get others to do the same. That is the only pathway to a blessed life and decent heritage for our children. But if there is no full repentance, we are going to suffer, and even worse, our children are going to go through hell. Concern for our children should get our attention!

Oracle 6: Discipline is Redemptive. Isaiah 1:24-26

Isaiah

1:24 Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies:

1:25 And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy sin:

1:26 And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city.

Imagine a timeline (Chart 2.1). Way out to the right is God’s eternal kingdom with Jesus as King. On the left is the beginning in which God is the King. His plan for history is to use His people, His children, the ones that He brought up out of Egypt, to reach the world. The holiness of His people, Israel, means that they are going to be a peculiarly

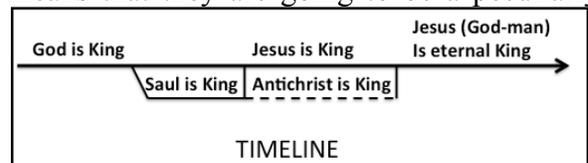


Chart 2.1

clean people at God's disposal. God planned on reaching the world because He had a people with which to do it.

But the people decided that they didn't like God's plan of divine government with God as their King. So, they said, "Oh, we must have a better king than the invisible God. We must have us a real king like the other nations have." And so they crowned Saul as king, and God ordained human government. That put them on a parallel path to God's divine path for them. They no longer even attempted to do God's original path of holiness. What they/we want is to be like everybody else—we want to have careers, have human kings, have taxes to support our government, and have all the problems that come with independence from God's holy choices.

Class, I have heard these desires expressed in my own lifetime. So here we are running this parallel path below God's path. And God is saying that out here in the eschaton, "I'm going to restore you up here to My Kingdom." So the whole deal, you see, all of history is planned around restoring us back to the path on which Israel started—a holy people, with holy God as King and on His holy path. And so, after the defeat of Antichrist, God's Son is crowned eternal holy King. And so, history goes from God is King to man is king to God-man is King.

Right now we are operating within two realities. Jesus is the Christian's King, but a human has been ordained by God as king in the current phase of human government. Christians are moving on this lower parallel path in which man is king, but we have surrendered our loyalties to Jesus as our King. Eventually the two parallel lines are going to merge both kingdoms (divine and human) into one universal and eternal government by Jesus, the God-Man King. God's ordination of man as king will continue on when His Son assumes the throne. With Jesus on the throne,

both God and Man will rule as King. The God-Man will be the King of the universe forever. God will have restored His Kingdom, and His ordination of human government will resume together.

We are supposed to be up here, on God's path because we have Him as our King, but the rest of the world is down here on man's path. Their savior is in politics, economy, the good life, power, prestige, happiness, and self indulgence.

For those on man's path, what is the answer for somebody that is destitute? Give him some money. That is salvific in the world's system. But what is the answer in God's system? A different kind of salvation is needed. We need God's forgiveness for our being on the wrong path. That is what Lord Jesus offers. He is the bridge for returning to God's Path. We must turn from our own way (repent) that leads to hell; turn to Jesus by asking for forgiveness and restoration to God's Path that leads to heaven. Jesus is the bridge to God's Path to heaven if you will take Him as your King.

The world's path ends with Antichrist as the world's king. What does the world want? History tells us that they wanted a human king, and they replaced God with Saul as king. God relented to the free will of His people and ordained the change to a human king, and Jesus is going to fulfill that new system by being a human alternative to Antichrist as king. Also through Jesus, God is restored as King because Jesus is also God, The Son. Therefore, those who have surrendered their lives to Jesus are restored to the path that leads to heaven. The new King Jesus is really the only way to have both God and Man as king because Jesus is the God-Man.

Sadly, people are dying, dying, dying before they get to a Gospel presentation. Worse yet, they walk by us to get to hell. We are too busy with our careers and our power

and our money and our nice clothes and all of the things in the world's path. Yes, some of us are just too busy with our church business of praying and trying to build attendance and revenue to bother with outsiders going to hell. Somehow that seems all right because we have "bigger fish to fry" in our church business. We are too busy over here praying for God to build our empire. Our hands are too full with the problems of taking care of our little flock to worry about all those people walking by us on their way to hell. It has become rare for the typical pastor to witness and give out Gospel tracts in the market place.

Isaiah sees that Israel is well on the way of the human-king path in which the kings are leading God's people into terrible sin. God has sent the prophets to give correction to the kings and warnings to the people.

Those warning are what we are studying in this course. Isaiah is the prophet who was sent to give God's Words to the kings that we have listed. Uzziah is the king who is fixing to die. Another one will take his place. God tells them/us that the time is coming when He will restore the kingdom and give you the good King who will shepherd them/us with God's good leadership and counsel. That time comes at the cross.

Restoring the theocracy requires redemptive discipline. All of God's redemptive discipline purposes restoration to His Kingship. Justice, mercy, and forgiveness will be applied in God's Kingdom. Redemptive discipline steers us toward His merciful Kingdom, which is the restoration of the Theocracy via the Lordship of Jesus. Resume God's Kingship by giving yourself to Jesus' ownership. It will take a bold, giant step that will be costly to your life, your dreams, your careers, your comforts, and your material security. It is going to be costly for your journey on the world's path, but if you take that step to God's Path, you will be grateful forever.

Oracle 7: The righteous will be redeemed, and the wicked will be destroyed. Isaiah 1:27-31

Isaiah

1:27 Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.

Zion is the Holy City that now includes us.

Isaiah

1:28 And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners [shall be] together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed.

1:29 For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen.

1:30 For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water.

1:31 And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench [them].

This is a straight up and down choice to be made. Every one of you is in here neither by accident nor by your own designs. I have prayed for you. I didn't know who I was praying for before registration, but I have prayed diligently for everybody in here. So, I think that God has a specific call for each of you. And maybe you have been fearful or ashamed or resistant, maybe other things have gotten in the way with your responding to the Lord. Maybe these are even good things. But the greatest enemy of God's very best for you will be a very good thing. Can you hear that? See, we are not fools where we will seek and purpose our lives toward an obvious evil. Where we are going to be deceived is when we are displacing God's best with something that appears to be God's best. So if Satan can pull you off path, and trick you into investing your whole life in good things, in good endeavors, and you should miss God's very best for you, that would be disastrous.

Please look inside your souls, and see what it is that God is calling you to do and maybe you have heard this call in the past, and you have heard it clearly and said, No, I can't do that. Maybe it has been fear. But if it has been a displacing of God's best with your best, I am asking you to repent the same way Isaiah said to these people here. He said, "You have displaced holiness with worship and ritual and things that had the appearance of being the best." And when you do that, you can be one of the finest Christians that the world has ever known in the eyes of man, but God's disappointment in you is as severe as it comes. He says, "Your hands are full of blood. You are murderers. You are intoxicating the world." That is how severe it is. Every good thing that is not God's best thing sees that level of condemnation.

So, what I want you to do is to reconsider holiness. Holiness means that you throw in with God; it is not God throwing in with you. It is a radical change of life. Will you throw in with God by adopting His kind of holiness? He commands: "Be ye holy even as I am holy." Now I am talking about a holiness that means throwing your life into the hands of God, not acting holy, but living holy by becoming a slave to Jesus so that He can live through you. Will you make that commitment? It is not a light commitment.

God is raising up a remnant for these last days. Time is fixing to run out. If you are going to do anything, do it while it is still light because the night which will stop our works is coming and it is at the door. You don't have time. All you have is the now. Will you commit? Will you throw in with God? Will you give your life? He may call you to die, you may have to take a lot of hits; you may lose your reputation. You may lose all of the things that you hold precious, but it is worth it.

Now we had our forefathers in history who have given their lives, been tortured,

been burned alive. While facing their deaths, all they had to do to stay alive was say "I recant my faith in Jesus." And they didn't do it. They went to the death, and I am so encouraged by what I read of our brave forefathers. Now you are going to be required to do the same thing. It may not be to the same high degree as what they had to give, but you mark it down. If you do not commit, your children, friends, and church will have to go without your leadership. You are praying for God to help your children to face Antichrist and win the victory. You are their example and their intercessor. God is counting on you to put feet to your prayers. If you choose your life, you are going to lose it.³ If you lose your life now, you will save it, and it will be invested in your children and your community. If you will commit tonight, my children and friends will benefit from you. When I commit tonight, your children and friends will benefit from me. This is serious. Will you do it? I am going to pray, and I am not going to embarrass anybody in here, but I am fixing to pray. You can adopt my prayer and make it your prayer. Do it. Just stay seated right where you are—bow with me.

Lord, in this moment, we have bowed our heads after hearing Your Word through Isaiah. We don't reject that Word, but we confess that we are guilty. We are wrapped up in our careers, lives, comforts, achievements, ministries, families, reputations, and many other things. God, I want to be wrapped up in You totally. God, I want to be holy. I want to be totally dedicated to Your service, I want You to make me Your slave, I want to be spent by You, Lord. I want my path to be directed by You. God, I pray right now that You will receive my offering of my life, and that You will be able to look at me when I pray, and hear me. I give You permission to spend me how You want to. God, I am praying that You will find me an asset to Your army of remnants, and that You will use me the

³ Matthew 10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

rest of my life for Your benefit. And God I pray for my children, and the children of my students, and all of our relatives that we are to be models for. I pray, God, that we will be those kinds of models that will bring blessings to our families, friends, and churches, and that our prayers will be heard, and that the benefits will be abundant all the way down to our children. Lord, these in my class, I ask for Your blessings upon them, and that You seal their commitments this night to

eternity. We offer them up as a sweet odor, Lord. Please receive them as pleasing to You and remember us through them. God, please make us useful in this world to help others to come to Your Kingdom. We love You, Lord, and we bless You, and we pray in the Name of Jesus for the Glory of our Lord and our Master, our Savior and God. Amen.”

Students all over the room: A massive Amen.

Chapter Questions

1. List the six messages in chapters 1 through 39.
2. List the three messages in chapters 40-55
3. List the two messages of chapters 56-66
4. Name the 7 Oracles of Isaiah 1.

Chapter 3

THE PROPHET ISAIAH

DESCRIPTION OF ISAIAH AS A HUMAN BEING INCLUDING HIS FAMILY AND HIS MINISTRY

1. Isaiah means “the Lord is salvation.”
2. Born in Jerusalem in 760 B.C.
3. His father was Amoz who was the possible brother of King Amaziah (2 Kings 14).
4. His wife was a prophetess (Isaiah 8:3).
5. His sons were Shearjashub (Isaiah 7:3). It means “a remnant shall return.” The second son is Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz (Isaiah 8:3). The name means “the spoil speeds, the prey hastes.”
6. Called in 742 B.C., the year of Uzziah’s death (Isaiah 6:1).
7. He was sawed in two by Manasseh (Hebrews 11:37 and non-canonical sources)
8. He served under five kings.
9. His prophecies were about the decline of Israel, the Babylonian exile of Judah, and Judah’s return from the exile.
10. The concurrent prophets were Micah in Judah and Amos and Hosea in Israel.

The condition of Judah is important for us to understand the prophet’s message. Therefore I will describe Judah under its kings during Isaiah’s time.

1. Uzziah (783-42 B.C.). Judah prospered under his reign. He (Uzziah) did good in the eyes of God, but he did not purge idolatry from the land.
2. Jotham (742-35 B.C.). He did the same as his father, Uzziah.
3. Ahaz (735-15 B.C.). Judah went into a state of apostasy under his reign.
4. Hezekiah (715-687 B.C.). Judah was reformed and went through a great renewal.
5. Manasseh (687-42 B.C.). Judah went into deep apostasy.

We will contrast how Judah perceived itself under Uzziah with how Isaiah perceived

it. Judah assumed the following false conclusions from their prosperity (there are four things under how did Judah perceive itself, and then we are going to have four things under Isaiah’s perception):

1. God’s covenant with Israel was indissoluble.
2. Israel discharged her covenant responsibilities via cult and sacrifice.
3. The Day of the Lord was seen to be triumph for God and Israel.
4. God will never allow Jerusalem to be captured.

Concerning the first one about God’s covenant with Israel being indissoluble, please note that this kind of belief is interpretive. The fact is that God’s covenant is indissoluble. We cannot dissolve God’s covenant. However, our interpretation of that covenant could be so wrong that what we believe to be the covenant does not actually exist. There is no covenant under the interpretation that Israel had. They erroneously saw themselves as being exempt from discipline because of their prosperity. By being the children of God, they believed that God was a respecter of persons, and that He would never bring punishment against His own children, and the proof was their prosperity. But that is not the case.

God is not a respecter of persons. He is going to treat His own children with the exact same justice that He is going to treat everybody else. Nobody is going to escape justice. Otherwise God would be a respecter of persons, and that cannot be.

This false conclusion is false because of Israel’s interpretation. Their interpretation excluded themselves from the responsibilities

of living up to what God requires of all people, including His children.

Isaiah's View of Judah under Uzziah's prosperous reign was entirely different from Judah's in the following ways:

1. The poor are oppressed.
2. Injustice abounds
3. Desire for wealth and power govern behavior.
4. Indifference to God's ethical demands prevails.

Isaiah's counter conclusions grow right out of Judah's false perceptions. The nation thinks that they are exempt from any demands over and above the worship and sacrifices that they are already doing. They think that they are fulfilling their covenant obligations by their sacrifices and are as good as you can get. That allows them to behave indifferently to God's demands.

Once a nation's behavior becomes indifferent to God's demands, it is going to be filled with oppression of the weaker people. Clamoring for wealth and power will cause the nation to continue to move into apostasy. Ritualistic worship, sacrifices, prosperity, and possession of God's Temple will disguise the apostasy.

We can fall right into the same trap. Our vulnerability depends upon a false view of ourselves, worship, prosperity, sacrifices, or church. Once we think that we are exempt or have arrived, that is where the problems begin. We must always be introspective of our lives, because none of us is walking a straight and narrow path perfectly. Every one of us is stumbling around. But if we think that we are doing everything right, then we cannot repent. When the prophet calls for repentance, today's church says, "Repent from what?"

Sam: Why don't our church members respond to the altar calls?

V: The book of Revelation says repeatedly, "He who hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." I had a former student call me and say that he was preaching to a bunch of earless people. He said there was nothing but solid bone where their ears were supposed to be. His sermons were just ricocheting all around the church without penetrating into anyone's mind.

Larry: When I preach about our sin of the upside down *kenosis*, my people quit listening. They just want to hear about how we are complete in Christ. They refuse to do any introspection.

V: Being complete in Christ is a fact, but it becomes a very deceptive thing when we think that completeness implies perfection in anything beyond personhood. The deception can keep us from progressing, from repenting, and from even following Jesus. When we include our ministry and works as part of our already achieved completeness in Jesus, then we get too content with ourselves.

Larry: I was talking to a guy the other day. He told me that because Jesus died on the cross, that gave him a shortcut, and he didn't have to go through this stuff.

Sam: That turns the *kenosis* upside down.

V: This trap is alive and well today in the church as it was in Judah under Uzziah.

Israel's destruction by Assyria was paralleled by the Church's destruction by the papal Dark Ages. After the period under study in this course. Judah was captured by Babylon. This tragic event was being foretold by Isaiah in his warnings to Judah about its drunkenness and idolatry. Judah's release from Persia to re-establish itself as a new nation in the Holy Land is paralleled by Isaiah's prophecies about the Lord's return to become the Church's King to rule the world.

Isaiah was warning Judah about its coming captivity by Babylon, and he is warning us of our coming captivity by the Antichrist. Just as Judah saw Israel's demise and did the same thing, the Church saw Judah's demise and is doing the same thing. With clear warnings from Isaiah and Jeremiah, we are running right into captivity.

"There are none righteous." The only righteousness that you have is the imputed righteousness. That imputed righteousness is a perfect righteousness because it is the Lord's Righteousness. However that imputed righteousness has to do with your personhood only, your ontology. Now, let's look at your works because they are going to be judged for the determination of your rewards in heaven.

Your being/personhood/ontology has now already been judged, and you have been declared justified, and that is why you are saved. But now, what is in store for you is a judgment of works, and when you are being judged on your works, He is not going to be a respecter of your righteous personhood because that is a past judgment. He is going to judge your works using the same measuring stick for both the saved and the unsaved. That measuring stick is the Word of God, and it alone will be used to measure every person's works. It doesn't matter who you are, what is going to be measured is what you did! He will not even ask one question about who you are. And, let me advise you right now, when you go up to stand before the Lord, don't tell Him who you are because He is not going to swoon and fall over backwards in great admiration. He is not going to excuse disobedience based on your being a "great" Christian.¹

John: The kind of reaction I get when I teach and preach this truth about the judgment

¹ You see people go up before the judges and say, "Don't you know who I am?" They expect the judges to excuse their behavior because of their VIP status.

of works is: "But a loving, merciful God wouldn't do that."

V: Tell that to Judah and Israel, God's people! Tell it to Sodom and Gomorrah, the devil's people. Those severe disciplines were from a loving, merciful God. He is also a just God!

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS AND THE BOOK OF ISAIAH?

I expect this back exactly as I am giving it to you.

1. The Masoretic text of A.D. 800 (our previously oldest text before finding the Dead Sea Scrolls) is extremely close to the Qumran texts found in 1947.
2. Two Qumran texts of Isaiah dated 200 B.C. were found.
3. One text is complete and the other is a fragment of about a third of Isaiah.
4. Both of these Qumran texts agree almost word for word; therefore the text has not changed since the birth of Christ.
5. Scroll number 1 is 17 sheets (24 feet by 10.2 inches high.) So basically it is almost the same size as a sheet of typing paper that is 24 feet wide.²

GOD'S CALL OF ISAIAH (ISAIAH 6)

Isaiah

6:1 In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

6:2 Above it stood the seraphims: each

² Our sheets usually have an inch margin of empty space all the way around the page. The scroll's writing surface had only the tiniest of margins. Don't get confused. They did not write a 24-foot line. Their lines were a page in width, and the pages were sewn side-to-side together into a scroll.

one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

6:3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, [is] the LORD of hosts: the whole earth [is] full of his glory.

6:4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

The year that King Uzziah died gives us a point of reference to know where Isaiah is in his pilgrimage. And in that year Isaiah was at the Temple, and he sees the Lord. Because seeing the Lord is not a common occurrence, this is a gracious move on the part of God to allow Isaiah to see Him. When the Seraphims are crying out “Holy, Holy, Holy,” this is like saying the holiest. This is a superlative kind of statement here because in Hebrew you don’t have a word for holiest. The way you express that is by saying it three times. It would be like “holy, holier, holiest.”

Please understand that holy means to be a morally clean vessel that is dedicated to the Lord’s sole use. Who is more dedicated to God’s use than God? You see, this idea of holiest is an absoluteness. That is what is being proclaimed. Here Isaiah is in the presence of absolute holiness. When you are in the presence of absolute holiness, your flaws are going to shine through very clearly. The contrast will be stunning. That is why when we go into worship the Lord, conviction lands on you. It is because the more clearly you can see the Lord, the more clearly you can see your flaws.

Then, something happens to Isaiah, and it has happened to me. I have heard testimony from some of you how it has happened to you too.

Isaiah

6:5 Then said I, Woe [is] me! for I am undone; because I [am] a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

When you come in contact with God in a worship experience, you are going to have this experience in that encounter. If you are in a worship service and you swell up with pride with how good you are doing, you are not meeting God. When you meet God, something is going to change in your life. You are not going to come out of that meeting the same as you went in. In the midst of that encounter, you are going to have this kind of statement: Woe is me! You cannot come into absolute holiness and stand there upright like this with your chest thrust out and your neck thrown back. There is no way to do that. When you come before God, there will be **WOE IS ME! FOR I AM UNDONE**. Not only will you see yourself more clearly, but you will see your partners, your people, your nation more clearly.

Why is it that some look upon our nation and think that we are progressing into the greatest time of our history? Perhaps it is because they have not the light of holiness shining down on what they are looking at. They see it in its own glory, and they see it from below which is a deceiving perception. Just like Judah saw itself. We have just listed the four ways that they had false conclusions; they saw themselves completely wrong. Isaiah saw them both prior to and after this encounter. After this encounter Isaiah said that he was undone and in the middle of a whole bunch of undone people. There is panic sinking into his soul here at this point.

Isaiah

6:6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, [which] he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

6:7 And he laid [it] upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

Now this is indicative of a painful removal of sin. Sin is removed at a very, very high cost. It cost Jesus His Life to remove my

sin, to remove your sin. That is an immeasurably steep price. Here Isaiah pays the high price. The live coal coming to touch on his lips like this is indicative of the pain of removing sin. But notice that it has to take place before the rest of this passage can happen. You see, God in His grace came and allowed Isaiah to see Him. Isaiah was an undone man, but he didn't know it before seeing the contrast. When he saw the Lord, then he knew his undoneness.

Like Judah, our population does not know that they are undone as well. It has to be their introduction to God's Word that declares that we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God for them to understand how undone they are. Jesus became God's living Word to give us an understanding of where and what we are and provide our needed rescue. Until you understand where you are in your undoneness, you can't come out of it. You must be lost before you can be saved! Isaiah expressed his lostness, and then the coal is placed on his lips to signify his cleansing.

We are reading Isaiah out of sequence because we must see that the cleansing of the prophet must be a prerequisite to his ministry. After we do Chapter 6, we'll go back to Chapter 2 and come forward.

Isaiah

6:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here [am] I; send me.

I want you to have this same urgency that Isaiah had. Isaiah discerned that his opportunity to serve God could be lost forever. When you hear God calling for a servant, and you don't spring up and say, "Here am I, send me," your opportunity can be lost forever. Don't you lollygag around and think that God is going to wait on you. You do just like Isaiah did here. When you hear that small

voice, you jump up and say, "Here am I, send me!"

Now you see how Isaiah's hearing improved after he got his sin purged. As soon as he got his sin purged, he could hear God. But prior to that he had no ears, and that is why the book of Revelation repeatedly says, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches." The one who has an ear is the one who has his sin purged. Once it is purged, the Christian can hear God's voice calling him to service.

When you hear God call, you had better spring up because that opportunity for you could be lost. If you want to know about 6,000,000 Jews who lost that opportunity, look at Israel's failure to go into the Promised Land. When God said, "I want you to go into the Promised Land and take the land." They sent spies in. The spies came back and gave a bad report: giants in the land. These people said, "We can't go in there; they will kill us!" They voted not to try. Then the leaders, wailed in the night and prayed, "Oh, God! Forgive these people." The people began to repent during that very night, and the next morning they got up and said, "We are going to go in and take the land. We have courage now, we trust God."

The leaders then advised that their time was past. Their day was yesterday. So, God said to 6,000,000 people, "I want ya'll to just go over here into the wilderness and walk in circles until you die. That is what they did! They walked in circles until they died. God gave the cowards manna and quail! He feeds the people who are not warriors as if they are dependent children. He feeds them! He makes their shoes last. Their clothes and shoes lasted for the rest of their lives. God takes care of all their needs as if they were His babies.

Do you know when the manna stopped? When they stood up to take sword and shield and said, "We'll follow God," then the manna

stopped. When they become warriors, God didn't have to baby them any longer.

Strangely, we want to be like the babies to be taken care of by God so that we can enjoy life. We want our clothes to last and manna to eat! Sure, we can walk around in a circle for all our lives and enjoy God's benefits. We exalt the babies and pooh-pooh the warriors! What is wrong with us? We get everything upside down and backwards. We need our sin purged so that we can see and hear like Isaiah.

Bob: Sometimes I get swept away with my emotions, and sometimes I think God is speaking to me through an impulse or some kind of feeling. I don't doubt that God will do that, but if we need to hear the voice of the Lord, and all we are getting are these impulses, these nudges, do we need to just stop and get on our knees and pray: "God, I need to hear your voice, and I need my sins to be purged." Is that going to help us to understand?

V: God's voice is clear because this Bible is His voice. You cannot hear His wee small voice on things not specifically noted in the Bible if you are not even obeying the clear statements of the Bible. That is why you are in this class. You must hear this stuff in a way that is very abrupt so that it shocks you and gets your attention.

You must walk your path based upon the last word you heard. You don't turn. You stay on that path even though it will certainly get tough. You press through all of the toughness and keep on going because the burden of proof is on the change. You stay on your path until God says, "Turn to this new path." Please always remember that the preponderance of the evidence must point to the change. Otherwise, you should maintain your current path. Please also note that the evidence for change is not in comfort. So you go straight ahead forward, pressing on, going through great resistance just like both Gabriel

and Paul said, "I came to you through great resistance."

Today's church assumes that ease and comfort are the ways of God. So, you go this way until it gets a little hard—"Well, God doesn't want me to go through none of that hard stuff." You will be tempted to look around. If you do, you will find that Satan has a wide, easy path over here that looks appealing. Don't go over there because it is easier. Also while you are struggling on your hard path, don't expect God to tell you to take another step. No, you keep on pushing forward taking the next steps on God's last assigned path. Use the intellect that God has given you.

In the *kenosis*, God says, "Let this mind be in you."³ There is a pattern there in that passage. Your choices can be weighed against that pattern. If it is sacrifice, it is God's way; if it is indulgence, it is Satan's way. Difficulty and discomfort is inherent with the *kenosis*. There are other things too, but we'll get to those along the way.

Okay, so then with the urgency and the sense that this opportunity could be lost, as soon as Isaiah begins to hear the Lord speaking, he springs up and he says, "Here am I, send me!" Now, I know that some, if not all, of you have that same feeling in your souls. God wants you to act, not just have the feeling, but to act. That means that you are going to make some changes. You are going to hear his voice say, "Who will deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me?"⁴ I heard that clear voice! Did you hear it? You'd better do it. Do it now before the opportunity is lost.

Terry: I used to have lots of friends. They don't want to hear about God's salvation from me. I am not giving up; I am pressing on with the next step.

³ Philippians 2:5

⁴ Luke 9:23; Matthew 16:24, Mark 8:34.

V: Amen!! When the Pharisees began to question the blind man who was healed by Jesus, he began to testify to who Jesus was, and they told him to shut up. When he continued to stand his ground about his healing, the Pharisees threw him out of the Temple. They excommunicated him. That is the kind of loss that every one of you is going to suffer.

Please remember that everyone who gets saved has a network of lost friends. Use that network to get those lost people. Get them in there to see their friend's baptism. When you baptize somebody, fill up your church with lost people. Baptisms and marriages present opportunities to use networks while they still exist. Get those people saved. The baptism of a young person attracts the aunts and uncles and cousins. They are a captive audience for the Gospel. You can get a lot done before they can get out of there.

God Accepts Isaiah's Voluntary Service (Is. 6:9)

Isaiah

6:9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

What is wonderful about this event is that Isaiah sprang up and said, "Here am I," as if the Lord couldn't see where he was, but he is over there jumping up with his hand raised saying, "Here am I." And the Lord says, "Okay, go and tell."

That is a wonderful commission there, and that is what He is telling us: Go and tell. Go and tell this people. Look at what it says that he is to tell them. God tells him to go tell them that they are hearing the Word but don't understand it. You see the evidence, but you cannot perceive it." That is what we need to tell the church. You hear the Word, but you don't even understand it. And you see what is going on without perception.

And then He says to Isaiah in verse 10, "I want you to wear them out with this message." (Laughter around the room).

Isaiah

6:10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

God warns against the people's turning without repentance. God abhors artificial discipleship. He is demanding the real thing from us. So, He tells Isaiah and us to go preach to them until they either repent or they harden.

I've heard it said that we are in a Gospel-hardened part of the country. But you can preach the Great White Throne Judgment sermon and shock them awake. I think it was the sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" that started the first Great Awakening in this country.

When God commissioned Isaiah, Isaiah asked for clarification on how long he was to preach this sermon. God's response is one of patience, i.e. standing under the burden. He tells Isaiah to go "preach, but that there is not going to be a revival. You are just going to make their ears heavy and. . . ." Have you ever seen heavy ears? They just hang down and around. . . . (laughter). Some of my classes remind me of hound dogs sitting there with their hang-down ears.

I am sure that Isaiah is thinking like us. He is thinking that obeying God will guarantee a great revival of repentance and things would get right. But the Lord is saying, "No, what you are going to do is you are going to preach until their ears hang down, and their eyes close, and there is going to be a hardening of the heart."

With a sinking heart, Isaiah asks: "How long have I got to do that Lord?"

Isaiah

6:11 Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,

6:12 And the LORD have removed men far away, and [there be] a great forsaking in the midst of the land.

God is telling Isaiah to preach until there is nobody left. And not only is he not going to have revival, but he is going to be preaching to the people who are going to depart further into apostasy.

Imagine that! Isaiah has to preach to the people who are going to progress in their apostasy. They aren't going to turn; they are going to get worse.

Terry: There is not an end to that assignment.

V: That's right. Your assignment is also forever. Until you fall down dead, you keep on preaching. That is your call and mine.

Scott: I've got a different call.

V: No, you are in it, too, Scott. Folks, we are all in this together. If we will accept this unlimited call to go for God, then God will raise up a remnant of true believers.

Isaiah

6:13 But yet in it [shall be] a tenth, and [it] shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance [is] in them, when they cast [their leaves: so] the holy seed [shall be] the substance thereof.

A remnant will rise up in Judah from Isaiah's preaching, and that remnant is going to save Judah for over a century past the fall of Israel. Jeremiah will be the next prophet sent to rescue Judah from its idolatry, but Judah will not respond at all to his preaching. That is when the ultimate collapse of Judah happens.

The saving of the nation is in the hands of the remnant. And the remnant that is turned

is the little people. And notice that this return, this repentance within the remnant is not the same kind that most Christians want. Most Christians think of revival in terms of the good life. They want God to pour out material blessings, heal their bodies, take away their struggles, and give them the good lives of the American dream. The churches will be filled with smiling, happy people who are enjoying life to the fullest while maintaining faithful attendance and tithing. That is what the church today thinks of as revival.

Pastors see an increase in church attendance and tithing as something that God swoons over and begins dumping all of heaven down upon you. That is not revival. No, revival is pain, revival is the suffering and sacrifice of self-denial, and revival is the kind of thing that the weak kneed and spineless cannot do. That is why verse 13 says, "How can this be revival? They are going to be eaten as a teil tree and as an oak whose substance is in them when they cast their leaves. That sounds like losing one's very vitality.

Trouble: We claim today that we are being persecuted when we encounter mere words from people that don't agree with us.

V: Right. There is real loss in the disciple's *kenosis*, such as loss of career, job, friends, comforts, and material goods.

Larry: Taking all these notes is persecution (laughter all over the room).

V: To whom much is given, much is required . . . to be written down.

Big Dog: He who has ears must take notes . . . (more laughter all over the room).

What is the pattern of Isaiah's encounter with God?

1. Saw God.
2. Convicted of sin ("Woe is me for I am lost").
3. Painful cure for sin.

4. Heard God.
5. Volunteered to be sent.
6. Sending by God.
7. Warning from God.
8. Question about mission: How long (the cry of distress)?
9. Apostasy worsens.
10. The remnant returns to holiness (the prophet's hope).

Chapter Questions

1. Tell what is known of Isaiah as a human being including his family and his ministry
2. Describe Judah under its kings during Isaiah's time.
3. How did Judah perceive itself under Uzziah, and how did Isaiah perceive it?
4. What is the relationship between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the book of Isaiah?
5. What is the pattern of Isaiah's encounter with God.

Chapter 4

INDICTMENTS AND WOES

Isaiah 2 starts off with a promise of universal peace. God held this hope out in front of the nation because he is fixing to lay it on them. He wants to preface what he is going to say with an offer of hope. The eschatological picture is one of peace and justice because the nation will be walking universally in the light of the Lord. God will be restored as King of His universal Kingdom without unseating the Man as King. This will be done via Jesus, the God-Man as King.

Now God is going to lay out some charges against His people. Then we will look at the disintegration of society and the characteristics of that in Isaiah 3.

WHAT ARE THE 7 CHARGES AGAINST GOD'S PEOPLE?

(Isaiah 2:6-11)

1. Soothsayers

Isaiah

2:6 Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east, and [are] soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers.

So here we have an indictment that they are trying to tell the future. I think that it would be something like stargazing or other methods of fortune telling instead of depending upon God's revealed promises and prophecies. In other words, this is false prophecy

2. Pleasing themselves in the children of strangers

You can take this as child molestation, or it could be seen as the children not being children but adult foreigners. In the latter case, it would be unequally yoking of intermarriage. It could be seen in a variety of ways here. It could even be referencing an

economic condition of bargaining with foreigners and forsaking their own economic system. I don't know exactly what this is that this charge means. I lean to child molestation, but I think that it could mean one of the other things as well.

Concerning intermarriage, when Joshua came in to take the Promised Land, God told him to destroy every living creature in that land. Joshua chose not to do that. What came out of that seeming good will toward innocent women and children was intermarriage. That intermarriage, however, resulted in the bringing in of Baalism.

The idolatry of Baalism that entered Israel via intermarriage with the Palestinians caused hundreds of thousands of Israelis to be slaughtered and the nation of Israel to be divorced by God. But that is not the worst result of the intermarriage. Baalism also caused millions of Jews to go to hell.

God forbids intermarriage between His people and the people that are not God's people. Intermarriage opens a doorway for new gods of idolatry, alliances, cultures, and corruption that will destroy the nation from within. The faith of the Christian spouse will wane, and the children of that union are more likely going to hell. That is why God forbids unequally yoking today.

If you are a Christian and you are seeking a mate, it is critical that you obey God and seek a Christian mate. Otherwise you commit the same sin against God that was brought in by Joshua and the nation when they took over the Promised Land. There are dire consequences to disobeying God's basic commandment of life's foundation, i.e. marriage. Something as serious as marriage must be protected above all other institutions of life.

Larry: New Age and much of the false worship of today may be rooted clear back to the time of Joshua as well. To me, they relate back to the false worship that came in because they didn't destroy all those people, I mean Buddhism and different stuff like that.

V: Yeah, if you are talking about it occurring in God's people. But if you are talking about the world in general, I would say no. All manner of false worship is going to be in the fallen world. Satan's people are going to do what they are inclined to do. The problem arises when God's people don't do what they are supposed to do.

3. Rich
4. Military Power

Isaiah

2:7 Their land also is full of silver and gold, neither [is there any] end of their treasures; their land is also full of horses, neither [is there any] end of their chariots:

5. Idolatry

Isaiah

2:8 Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made:

6. Lofty
7. Haughty

Isaiah

2:11 The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

What is the difference between lofty and haughty?

Helen: Lofty is self-elevation.

V: Okay, lofty would be the kind of thing where you are looking up, and you think there's nothing I can't do, no heights that I can't scale.

Helen: Haughty is looking down on people.

V: Yes. You think that others are not as capable as yourself. Both of them really are rooted in pride.

ISAIAH CHAPTER 3

What are the symptoms for the disintegration of society?

1. The government will be by children, not statesmen.

Isaiah

3:1 For, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water,

3:2 The mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient,

3:3 The captain of fifty, and the honourable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator.

3:4 And I will give children [to be] their princes, and babes shall rule over them.

In other words we are going to have a crisis in leadership. The leaders are going to be incompetent, self-centered weaklings. That is a symptom of disintegration of society because it results in factions.

2. Oppression will be on every side from and against others in the community.

Isaiah

3:5 And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable.

Oppression will be within families as insubordination and between neighbors as jealousy and sabotage. The base against the honorable is a despising of honorable people by dishonorable people. It is basically a collapse of respect and the proper order of things.

3. The choice of government leaders will be economic, not moral.

Isaiah

3:6 When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father, [saying], Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and [let] this ruin [be] under thy hand:

Trouble: These symptoms are present now.

V: That is why Isaiah and all of the Old Testament is relevant for us because it applies right here, right now.

Joe: In that verse, it seems like they throw qualifications out the window.

V: No real qualifications, like integrity, morality, and positive experience, will be considered. Only externals, such as possessions and mere appearances, will be used in the selection of leaders.

When these symptoms appear, look out! God warns of what will be coming.

4. Ruin comes from going against God in speech and deed.
5. The nation will be proud of homosexuality.

Isaiah

3:8 For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings [are] against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory.

3:9 The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide [it] not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.

6. The Law of the Harvest.¹

Isaiah

3:10 Say ye to the righteous, that [it shall be] well [with him]: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

3:11 Woe unto the wicked! [it shall be] ill [with him]: for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

V: If you behave unseemly, you will reap the results of that behavior. Results are behavior dependent. We have people today who refuse to admit that anything is behavior dependent. They demand that STD's be exempt from sexual impropriety, family problems be exempt from divorce, poverty be exempt from laziness, decreasing standards of living be exempt from increasing taxes, loss of freedoms be exempt from increasing government regulations, etc. Our society wants God's Laws to be nullified by disassociating results from behavior. But God says that they are going to be behaviorally based and that there is no way to escape from His Laws.

7. The oppression from children and government by women lead to the destruction of the good and wholesome traditions established by God in His creation.

Isaiah

3:12 [As for] my people, children [are] their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause [thee] to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.

Joe: Leaders of the country, leaders of your house . . . ? How far do you go?

Sam: All areas!

Raymond: I think it starts at home.

Big Dog: It is stewardship over God's institutions. It is up to us to make the choices from top to bottom. We elect our leadership!

V: That is a good point, and it connects with 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Larry: Yes, it is our responsibility to vote and guard the wholesome traditions established by God. Those paths cover the whole range of societal structures from top to bottom. It affects the top and filters down to the homes, or it starts in the homes and filters up to the top. Same results either way.

¹ Galatians 6:7

Raymond: Few godly men are running for office. What do we do then?

V: 2 Chronicles 7:14 promises a healing of the land upon our repentance.

Helen: There are a lot of churches that would not even exist if it weren't for the women taking leadership roles.

Terry: I think that the oppression on every side means that it is on every level.

V: On every side at every level.

Max: There is also a difference between oppression and ruling by the leadership. You can lead without being oppressive.

Helen: I think that women have a harder time disciplining children, so all of this can be tied together that the leaders have forsaken their posts, the women are leading, and the children tend to manipulate the womenfolk.

Mr. Gulley: I also believe, that leadership is learned in following. God set everything in order.

Terry: If we just take God's statement at face value, then the fault lies with the leaders. Liberal leaders want the nation to be liberated from God's Law of the Harvest. Followers want good results from electing bad leaders by shirking their responsibilities.

Bob: Everybody belongs to a family, and if the family starts messing up, then everything is going to mess up because from the families go the leaders of the cities and the leaders of the states and the leaders of the country. So everybody is going to be fouled up. As the family goes, so goes the nation.

V: Yes, that is the story throughout history for the natural family and God's family.

Jack: There are men who do not know what it means to be a man. I spent the first twenty-five or thirty years of my life doing what I saw modeled before me on TV and in my family. Only recently have I begun to

learn what it means to be a man and how to conduct myself properly. If we elect culturally shaped men to leadership positions, then they are going to shape the nation accordingly.

Raymond: And a woman, in my case, took up the abandoned leadership of my family. I didn't know a dad because he left before I was born. So I grew up with what was on TV or whatever from whomever. I was trying to follow everything around me because no one put God in front of me.

Helen: You had no positive role model. I think the women have taken over the leadership because men have failed to be the leaders.

V: Women moved right into the void.

Sam: In the case here, is Isaiah talking about women ruling because there were no men around because of their being decimated in war?

V: No, it is not that. The situation in Judah is one of prosperity; everybody is happy and content. But they are not following the Lord. They are doing all of these things that God listed in the seven charges. So, what is the society going to look like if the charges are true, i.e. these charges will be the symptoms that will be seen in apostate society.

What should these symptoms cause us to do? They should cause us to look back at God's charges against us! The reason that we don't do that is because we keep being told that we are the perfect body of Christ, the spotless bride. We think that everybody is going to have a mansion and crowns and all rewards without doing anything. We call ourselves disciples when we cannot even breathe in and out without getting mixed up. We look at ourselves and see no problems, no symptoms. We read Isaiah and exempt ourselves from all the historical recriminations and claim only the promises of blessings to

apply to our wonderful selves. So, what do we repent from?

Sam: Nothing.

V: Yes, nothing.

Mr. Gulley: Concerning the reason why women are in so much leadership is because men have failed to do what they are supposed to do. Didn't that start in the Garden of Eden?

V: Yes, I think Eve took the lead and led Adam by the nose.

Isaiah sees his symptom clearly. He sees himself as a man with unclean lips. He is in despair, "Woe is me." He is undone, but he gets cleaned up, and he is told to go preach. Now, he begins preaching away. What are the results going to be? Zip, because the people are not going to repent from what they believe is right.

The same problem is expressed in the book of Malachi. Every time Malachi said that the Lord is angry about something, they would say, "Well, how have we offended the Lord in that area?" He goes through one charge after another after another, just a continuous barrage of indictments against God's people. On every indictment they say, "How have we offended God? When did we do that?" So they think of themselves as innocent, and once you fall into that innocent trap, then there is no way you can repent. That means, then, our society has to crumble.

The only people that God is indicting are His people. Why is the society of America like it is? because of God's people. We are scared to death to open our mouths. We can't even vote right. We can't even figure out whether homosexuality is right or wrong. We shrink from our prophetic duties to engage society with our salt and light. What good are we when our saltiness no longer has its savor or our light is hidden under a basket? Oh, we hide within the walls of a church building in

order to let our light shine. When we re-enter the market place, we become dark once again in order to keep hidden our identifications with Jesus. We seek to prevent all conflict from the world that Jesus told us would occur.

8. The government leaders oppress the poor and weak.

Isaiah

3:14 The LORD will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor [is] in your houses.

3:15 What mean ye [that] ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

Power has always corrupted leaders because it enables them to impose their wills on other people who have less power. The poor and weak have the least power in society. So therefore, they are the most vulnerable.

9. The women are proud and haughty.

Isaiah

3:16 Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing [as] they go, and making a tinkling with their feet:

Women have little bells on their feet to draw attention to themselves as they mince along. What is a mincing walk?

Janet: It's a prancing in short steps.

Sue: Wiggling and twisting.

Isaiah

3:17 Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts.

3:18 In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of [their] tinkling ornaments [about their feet], and [their] cauls, and [their] round tires like the moon,

3:19 The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers,

3:20 The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings,

3:21 The rings, and nose jewels,

3:22 The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the cringing pins,

3:23 The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils.

3:24 And it shall come to pass, [that] instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; [and] burning instead of beauty.

3:25 Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war.

3:26 And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she [being] desolate shall sit upon the ground.

As the women played a role there in determining Judah's destiny, they are doing so again here in America. I think that the women share in the collapse of morality. It is not just the men. This long passage of Scripture is dedicated to the women for a purpose.

You fathers get your daughters under control. There should be none of this tinkling bells and mincing steps and stuff. Look at their jewelry, decorations, and clothing. Get control of your families.

Helen: It is not just the women now that are wearing a lot of jewelry. The men are, too.

Motorcycle Ray: I think the parents are too permissive. They are trying to be friends instead of parents. We have to watch out who our daughters go out with too.

Outlaw: we must not allow them to be put into a situation to where they can fall into sexual sin.

Mr. Gulley: When the TV babysits or cares for our children, they are being brainwashed to fit in with our sick society. So, those things that they see that appear so attractive are the things that they adapt to. If

we don't constantly censor, the children will give their souls to the devil.

V: Yes, that is happening to our children, even in good families!

Terry: It seems like there is a word picture of God's people being more concerned with their appearances. We are preoccupied with our images and expect a good result because we look good. We think that we are doing what we are supposed to be doing, but we are doing the exact opposite.

Helen: Worshipping of ourselves is another form of idolatry.

V: So if you focus on the external, no matter how good it looks, you are going to reap destruction because that is sowing to the flesh.²

Terry: And that is the vacuum that our kids are going to get sucked right into. We will be preoccupied with all that glorious, showy stuff instead of denying ourselves and taking up our crosses and following Jesus.

V: Yes. I find it difficult to teach the *kenosis* to today's Christians. Discipleship requires the *kenotic* life of self-denial, taking up our cross, and following the Lord. There is no *kenosis* or discipleship without self-sacrifice. When I teach that today, the saints resist it. They/we are brainwashed by the wisdom of the world. And that is coming from television and society in general. Brainwashing becomes a vicious cycle; it feeds upon itself. Society feeds upon the television, television feeds upon society, and it is a spiral that is getting worse.

Freddy: Baiting the fish is to tempt it to go after the worm. If we yield to what we see, then we will go after our carnal natures. We have to be more studious and not yield to what we see. Because there again, what looks good to us is not a good choice.

² Galatians 6:8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.

V: Yes. The choice is either to follow your eyes of flesh or to follow your eyes of spirit.

Raymond: When I don't pray about my choices, I find myself failing continually.

Freddy: We must realize that we can't have whatever we want. Our problems seem to be about the things that we want. When we take that bait, we are choosing the opposite of self-denial.

V: Because we can't see the hook within the things that we want (deception), failure to deny ourselves results in our getting caught on the hook.

Now all of this stuff that we are dealing with here causes societal demise. There is corruption in the land. Deception is imbedded in the people's minds because when Isaiah calls for repentance or brings the indictment, there is no repentance. That lack of repentance comes from someone thinking that they are okay and that the indictment doesn't apply to him.

The same is true for us. God is calling us to repentance, but we don't see the need for it.

Raymond: I think that the deception is that we are going by our own standards. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: [but] Israel doth not know me, my people doth not consider (Isaiah 1:3)." They/we are going our own way and thinking that it is God's way.

V: So when God tells Isaiah to go and preach, He also tells him that they are not going to hear him because they think that they are already okay. And when Isaiah and we ask how long? God, Who is long-suffering, responds to preach until there is nobody left.

The issue is that our people can't hear an indictment when they think that they are absolutely innocent. That is why the people are not responding to our sermons.

We can't stop preaching repentance just because we are not getting any results.

James: The verse about the women and their dress deals a great deal with vanity, overindulgence, sensuality, and even sexuality. The way Christian women are adorning themselves and dressing for church services is terrible. Some dress like whores.

V: We're being changed by our culture instead of vice versa by being the salt and light.

Max: Verse 16 talks about the daughters of Zion being proud in their walking in their seductive ways. These seductive ways are acceptable in all parts of our society today.

V: When we buy into political correctness, then our morality becomes right in our own eyes.

Mr. Gulley: The prophet is calling the people's attention to the error of too much compromising by the church in dress, divorce, adultery, etc. Compromises!

Max: Our sermons may be off center because attendance and tithings trump behavior for us. We're not telling people things that make them uncomfortable. We're tickling their ears by telling them what they want to hear. We're not telling them what God wants them to hear.

V: Good point, Max.

Helen: When the church has so much debt we can't afford to lose a member, then we can't afford to offend anyone.

Raymond: God says He will supply all our needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.³ God is going to take care of us. The pastors don't believe or even hear the truth.

³ Philippians 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Alberta: If the issues are not addressed, then the false security by the people thinking that they are not doing anything wrong is strengthened.

V: That's right. That specific bad behavior gets worse, and it causes other kinds of bad behavior in other areas. Soon, instead of just one problem, you will have a whole passel of problems overwhelming you.

SIX WOES RESULTING FROM THE NINE PROBLEMS

God's Vineyard (Isaiah 5:4)

Isaiah

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

God is saying, What more needs to be done? I did everything in my vineyard that I can do. What more was needed?

What more is needed in God's vineyard? All right, you are God's vineyard. What more could God have done in you than what He has already done?

Helen: He could have said the church.

V: Yes, He is using the vineyard analogy to refer to His using His people to produce fruit for Him. He is pointing to the historical Judah and the present Church. What more could God have done in His Church than what he has already done? Now if the Church is the cause of the demise of the country, what more could God have done than what He has done? You see, the question is where does the fault lie? with God? or with us?

After His question, God issues a threat. I hope that you feel the heat that I feel on this one.

Isaiah

5:5 And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; [and] break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down:

5:6 And I will lay it waste: it shall not be

pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

5:7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts [is] the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

Turn with me to 1 Samuel 4:19-22.

1 Samuel

4:19 And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, [near] to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her.

4:20 And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard [it].

4:21 And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband.

4:22 And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken.

Ichabod is the warning to us. Our churches are focusing on just the justification part of salvation to add the noses. Then they follow up with sermons on tithing in order to add the nickels. With nickels and noses going up, they have proof positive that there is no need to repent.

Now turn to Revelation 2:5. This is the message to the first of the seven churches,

Revelation

2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Ichabod means that the glory of the Lord has left the church. If the church doesn't repent, then Ichabod. If the church doesn't repent, weeds and thorns and briars will take

over the vineyard of God. The walls will be broken down. Every intruder will trample upon it. There will be no protection for it, and God will allow it to take care of itself. God has done everything that He can do, period! It is up to us now. Now if that doesn't strike fear, . . .

Helen: That is already happening here.

V: Yes, we are in the middle of this devastation. The only way out is to repent. But we can't repent when we think that we are doing everything right.

Terry: Repentance seems to be the theme of this book.

V: Yes. Repentance is the hardest thing to hear. When you are so righteous and innocent, how can you hear the message to repent? There is not a person in this room that doesn't need to repent, including me! When that wee small voice comes into your consciousness, heed that voice.

Terry: God is asking the question in order to clarify blame. Is God to blame? He asks what more could He have done. If God is not to blame, then our self-righteousness should dissolve right there. But we refuse to even consider anything that is not politically correct. We are in effect implying that God is to blame because we *know* that we are innocent.

V: Oh, my, I hear you.

Terry: As soon as I read that question I began to shrink. I realized that I'm guilty, you know, woe is me. It is a matter of how we are going to respond, with pride or like He is trying to get us to do—repent.

V: Yes. That is the choice that God put before Judah and now before us. You preachers must start getting your people past their comfortable passiveness that they find in your sermons on justification, God's love, the spotless bride of Christ, the tithing-and-attendance standard for meeting all responsibilities, etc. Let them know what the sins are

that Isaiah is exposing. Call for repentance and true *kenotic* discipleship.

Jerry: Taking down the hedge and the wall seems to point to our armed forces and how our government is reducing our ability for home defense. Isaiah warns the women that your men will die by the sword.

V: No, the military hedge may be included, but the spiritual hedge for the churches has been knocked down so that every evil spirit can get free passes into the church. Out of those intrusions is going to come all the destructive ramifications for the church. Soon the people of God will not be able to discern right from wrong in their voting. The church's prophetic ministry will disappear. Then the ramifications on the nations will be in the military, economic, government laws, education, and moral areas. In the schools, you are going to have kids killing kids; you are going to have the collapse of society with drive by shootings, and the hedonistic life styles by the parents who will ingrain narcissism into their kids.

All areas of life are going to suffer because of this spiritual problem in God's vineyard. It will not get better; it is going to get worse because God Himself has been keeping the vineyard plowed, hedged, and watered. He says here, that He is pulling His hands back. He is going to let the weeds grow and stop the clouds—the clouds are not even going to come over to drop moisture on the vineyard. This is a spiritual drought. I have seen several physical droughts over Fort Worth in which whole lakes have dried up and watering restrictions were implemented in the DFW area. Please understand that physical droughts *signify* spiritual droughts for those who are very slow in understanding spiritual messages.

Mr. Gulley: Another thing that we need to look into is group pride. Groups take on a particular attitude and become a gang. Once that happens, then you have to join in order to

identify with that attitude. When you join, then you begin to become identified with the group's pride. The next step becomes a competition within the group to establish an individual pride for oneself. Thus, the circle has been made from individualism to group dynamics and back to individualism.

V: Okay, I think I'm with you because I can see that dynamic in the churches

Please see that God is not talking to the Philistines; He is talking to His own bride!

Terry: God's Church is making a willful choice to turn from God today.

V: Yes.

Terry: Compromise is a willful choice.

V: Yes. Let me illustrate it. The Lord says, "Bill, follow me. Before you do, deny yourself and pick up your cross." Okay, I hear that and think that I am going to follow Him without those two prerequisites because His ultimate goal is for me to follow Him, right? So, I continue on in my chosen career. Next, I pick a ministry to do and ask the Lord to come bless my ministry. I have, in effect, asked the Lord to follow me. Then, I hear God's Word saying repent, and I say: "From what? I'm already doing great ministry! Look at my growing ministry and growing wealth." We don't call that scenario rebellion. We call it good discipleship when we go our own successful way

Jerry: Self-denial is what the pruning of the vine's branches is talking about in the Gospel of John.

Helen: It is the *kenosis*!

V: Yes, God's purpose is to increase the fruit, and He does it via pruning away self-indulgence.

Larry: I think that riding the beast in Revelation 17 is to allow the beast to choose your prosperous journey because you give up holding the reins of self-denial and sacrifice.

V: Yes, it is taking a ride the easy way by choosing to allow the beast to make all your future choices. You get rewarded in this life by trading your choices to the beast.

THE SIX WOES

We saw the indictments, then we saw the symptoms, and now we are seeing the woes as pronounced by God.

1. *Woe to the amassers of wealth (Isaiah 5:8-10)*

Isaiah

5:8 Woe unto them that join house to house, [that] lay field to field, till [there be] no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!

5:9 In mine ears [said] the LORD of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, [even] great and fair, without inhabitant.

5:10 Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah.

The American dream is to amass wealth and power. When we spend our lives pursuing wealth, we cut short what we can do for our eternal wealth. We may amass wealth, power, and status in this life, but it all will flash like gunpowder when it is tested by fire in our works judgment.

2. *Woe to The drunkards and self-indulgent people who leave God's work undone (Isaiah 5:11-17)*

Isaiah

5:11 Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, [that] they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, [till] wine inflame them!

5:12 And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands.

5:13 Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because [they have] no knowledge: and their honourable men [are] famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.

Turn with me to Revelation 17:2. The whore is sitting upon the many waters. I am going to show you something about drunkenness that you need to know. Drunkenness is not just with wine. It says here after verse 1 describing the great whore.

Revelation

17:2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

That drunkenness is not from alcohol that you drink, you see. It is drunkenness from a different kind of wine. Fornication with the world's system is that wine that causes us to start leaving undone the work of God because of our self desires, or our own interests or our pursuits of worldly happiness. God says that these indicate that we are drunk.

Tom: Deceived.

V: Right! And this is what Isaiah is talking about in woe number 2. In all of the Old Testament, you have the double entendre when it speaks of drunkenness. One meaning is in the physical drunkenness from alcohol, and the other is drunkenness in the spirit of the heart. What I want you to see here is that the most dangerous one for you is the spiritual one. If you are drunk on the wine of your self-seeking or pleasure or desire or career or ministry, and you leave undone God's work, you, too, are under this condemnation. Don't think that we are going to escape it.

I declare to you that this problem is the biggest problem in the Southern Baptist Churches, because the Southern Baptist Churches have really good theology of Justification, but we have a people who are leaving undone God's work. Why are they leaving undone God's work? Because they are drunk, not from drinking, but in being good people seeking to be good citizens, seeking a career and education so that they can have good jobs and good clothes and all of the good things of life.

What does God call you to do? Deny yourself is the first medicine that we take in the healing process. ***Deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow Him.*** It doesn't say to go out and get a good career! It says follow Him. That's your life, and when you come short of that, you are drunk and leaving undone God's work.

Drunkenness is our problem today. God's work is not getting done. We have a church full of spiritually passive people. They come to church and sit down in the pews. When do they stand up? When a prayer is said, a song is sung, and when it is time to go home. Then they leave and resume their drunken routines. They think that God is swooning over the fact that they actually got to the church and got home again all by themselves.

Raymond: Then we all want to hire a physician to cure our problems.

V: Anytime that the devil can get you to do a good thing at the cost of God's best thing, you are off God's path and on the beast's path.

Terry: We all seem to think the consequences are all going to be eschatological, but consequences aren't all there. There are some here on this earth.

V: Yes, some are also here, but they mainly rob us of rewards in heaven.

Terry: I remember Moses when he left God's work undone, God sought to kill him. Consequences come if we don't do God's work while we are here.

V: That's an excellent connection with Exodus, Terry.

Helen: The Children of Israel left God's work undone, too, when they did not go into the Promised Land.

V: That's right! And that cost all of them their lives.

Mr. Gulley: Concerning willful sin, Hebrews 10:25 declares that if one willfully sins, there is no more sacrifice for that sin. So, is willfully sinning like opening the door to all kinds of things happening to me.

Many Students: Yes!

V: Concerning the book of Hebrews, however, the main lesson has to do with getting in the deep water versus getting in shallow water or up on the bank. The problem is when you are on the bank; God's river flows on by. You are supposed to be in that river going where it goes. But when you get up on the bank, the opportunity to go with God flows by you, and you are left high and dry. You can repent and weep and grieve, but the best you can do is get back into the river. However, you will never get to where you would have been, you see, if you had stayed in the river. If you had stayed in the river, you'd be way down God's path. So when you get up in the shallows, and you are standing on the ground, then the river flows on by, and your opportunities go with it. That is drunkenness. You are drunk on your fornication with your comforts in the world.

3. **Woe to the person who is harnessed to his sin (Isaiah 5:18-19).**

Isaiah

5:18 Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope:

5:19 That say, Let him make speed, [and] hasten his work, that we may see [it]: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know [it]!

This person is so tied tightly to his sin that he challenges God to prove him wrong. It takes an arrogant person to be like that, to challenge God, but the people of Malachi did that on every accusation. Each time God brought the indictment, they'd say, "How did we do that? When did we offend you?"

4. **Woe to the person who reverses the meanings of evil and good (Isaiah 5:20).**

Isaiah

5:20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

When we get on the wrong path, we begin to lose moral perception. For example, I got into an argument with a seminary honcho over abortion. That guy had decided that it would be a greater evil to stop abortion because of the hunger in the world that would result from too many babies being born.

5. **Woe to the person who thinks too highly of themselves (Isaiah 5:21).**

Isaiah

5:21 Woe unto [them that are] wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

Now folks if you are like me, you quake, and your knees tremble. God has already caught me on this one. So we won't comment about this woe. I am already taking a whipping on this one, and in a strange way, I am glad for the whipping.

6. **Woe to the person who is driven by drugs to let down his guard against wickedness and begins to promote injustice (Isaiah 5:22-23).**

Isaiah

5:22 Woe unto [them that are] mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink:

5:23 Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

These are the narcissistic perverters of justice for self gain.

The kenosis as applied in discipleship is the answer to these woes. Discipleship is defined by Jesus Himself as denying yourself, taking up your cross, and following Him. Following Jesus is obedience to Him via

implementing the ministries that He tells you to do (this is taught in depth in course 3 on evangelism). But the prerequisite first two steps, i.e. denying yourself and taking up your cross, are accomplished via the *kenosis* (this is taught in depth in course 4 on the book of Hebrews).

Now before we leave this discussion, I want to talk to you a minute about what the *kenosis* looks like. Chart 4.1 is the model for the *kenosis*. Self-denial is a coming down.

Philippians 2:5 says, “Let this mind be in you,” which was in the Lord Jesus. Then it tells about how He humbled Himself, became a man, became a servant, and then was despised, and He suffered all things, and then He became obedient, obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

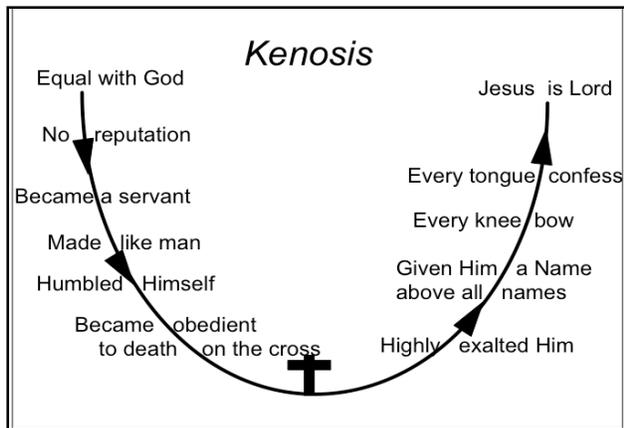


Chart 4.1

So, the *kenosis* is Jesus’ coming down from His being up at the top equal with God. Up at the top is where He starts. He comes down, down, down, down, even to death on the cross. Then after the death on the cross, He is exalted back up to the top where every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. The Lord’s model is your model (“Let His mind be in you”). Your life is one of self-denial. You deny yourself by going down from your comforts and desires, take up your cross for self-sacrifice, and follow Jesus in obedience and ministry. Your entire Christian journey is

on this downward path to the crucifixion, just like the Lord’s was. You come all the way down, and you die. You give your life, then, as a sacrifice for the purpose of God’s glory. That is what you are commanded to do—every one of us is commanded to do this in Philippians. 2:5-11.

Now I want you to understand that your exaltation comes *after* death. Before the cross, the people are mocking Him and putting on Him a crown of thorns and laughing at a pitiful king of the Jews. They strike Him and treat Him despicably. Yes, He comes down, but after death, He is raised up, and He is Lord. This is your path as well. You cannot stay where you are as a self-willed man. It is time for you to repent, and start your trek down, and live a self-sacrificial life, a life in which you gain it by losing it.

Now if you will do this, then the Lord will exalt you after death and say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.” That is what you want to hear. But **the *kenosis* is the only path to that compliment.**

The opposite of that path is the path that the world advocates. We have been taught from our births to climb on up, get all you can get, be all that you can be. Be haughty, and proud, and strut your stuff. Get the applause of men, and all the way up at the top of Chart 4.2 to get your throne, and you sit on it. All the people will swoon over how great you are.

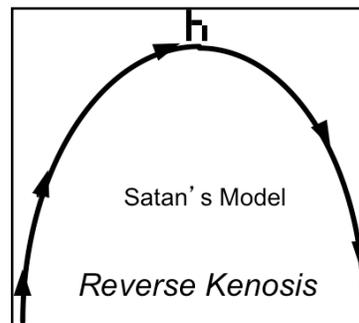


Chart 4.2

But look at what happens after death. There is the great fall because you’ve already gotten your reward. Down at the bottom is where you will end up. You who lived your life your own way are going to find great loss for

eternity. This is drunkenness; it is a bad deal; don't take it!

Drunkards are self-indulgent people. Yeah, they are getting a great career. I want you to see drunkenness with a spiritual eye. I am not talking about drinking booze and carrying on (class laughter). See—every one of you knows what a drunk is. I could tell right off about you guys (more laughter).

We are being challenged. Are we harnessed to our sin? God commands us to not do something, but we do it anyway because we are reversers of good and evil. Whatever feels right has got to be good. Right? Wrong!

Being wise in our own eyes is the world's wisdom. It says, get all you can get. We pervert justice for self-gain, and if it feels right, it has to be right. Don't follow your gut. Follow your *kenotic* mind. Follow the Mind of Jesus, but please know that it will "feel" painful. I call it the long, hard route.

Now the woeful person thinks that it is going great. He is buying land here and there with houses here and there. He is so wealthy that he doesn't know how to handle it all. He has many people working for him and enriching him! It's going great in his mind. His success proves that he is on God's path. He's getting on up there toward his throne. In our evaluation, that person is a great Christian because he is in church every Sunday and Wednesday. Insipient Deuteronomic-theology causes Christians to think that a man's great successes prove that God is blessing him for being such a godly man.

So, here comes us pesky preachers and teachers preaching the *kenosis*. The members ask: "What is wrong with you. Why do we have to do all this terrible stuff. Why do we have to give up every thing? Why can't we have the things like the great Christian has?" I hear that kind of talk. I've cried the tears

myself over this Truth. I know what I am saying here, folks.

Woe is this path that goes up. You know why God says woe is in this upward path? It is because it is an eternal woe. This fall to the bottom goes on forever and ever. It never changes. You've gotten your 30 years worth of fun and greatness, but you have traded your birthright for it. You sold your soul. Yes, you go to heaven, but it is an eternity in which you lost the praise from your Lord. You miss out on hearing Jesus say the words well done. Instead, He will say, "You embarrassed Me because you chose drunkenness instead of focused and alert obedience of My commandments."

God is telling Judah and us: "I gave you an example. I suffered and died. I didn't have a pillow to lay my head. I didn't even have a change of clothes, and I suffered the worst miserable death. I am the Lord. That is what I did. I told you to have the same mind as I had. I gave you an example, I gave you the words, I gave you the prophets, and I gave you apostles, I gave you pastors, I gave you teachers. What else can I do in my vineyard?"

"So, you despised My words and example? Okay, I'll stop the rain, i.e. stop the preaching and teaching. There will be no more Spirit enlightening you." The doctrine of sanctification is no longer preached in our current draught.

Class, since we unwisely have refused to repent, God has let the vineyard go its own way. The clouds from where the rain comes, the refreshing rain of the Spirit from the words of the pastors and teachers, have stopped. Instead of the refreshing rain of the Spirit, what are you getting and giving? Ear tickling at worst, and dot salvation at best! Your vineyard is going to deteriorate, and the hedges are going to be knocked down, and every manner of beast is going to run through your vineyard.

There is only one alternative, and that is the wisdom of God! The wisdom of God is this: denying yourself, taking up your cross, and following Jesus in His *kenotic* ministry of sacrifice for others.

It doesn't matter where you want to be, it doesn't matter what you want as a vocation or a career, and it doesn't matter anything about what you want to own. It is what God wants that matters. Your every breath and every heartbeat is to be devoted to what God wants. Do not let your feelings guide you because following God in sacrifice does not feel good. Let Him set your priorities and guide your

life. And if He is allowed to do so, you will be on the *kenosis* (Chart 4.1). If you are setting and shaping your path on the basis of feelings, it will be on the upside down *kenosis* (Chart 4.2).

Louis: To those who repent the Lord will still send the rain, won't He?

V: Yes, He will. Now, it may not come from the pulpit if your pastor is on the climb. It may come privately to you when you open the Scriptures.

Okay. Do you feel the heat like I feel it?

The whole room: Yes!

Chapter Questions

1. What are the charges against His people in chapter 2?
2. What are the symptoms for the disintegration of society?
3. What are the six woes of chapter 5?
4. Draw the *kenosis*, give Scripture reference.

Chapter 5

ISAIAH'S MINISTRY

Basically, we are going to be looking at Isaiah and his personal ministry tonight. This tact is going to cause us to have to jump around a little bit in the Bible. Let's start in Chapter 7.

THE SYRO-EPHRAIMITIC CRISIS

First, I will rehash a little bit in order to set the stage for understanding Isaiah himself. We talked about the Syro-Ephraimitic Crisis already in our setting his context. We covered the kings and how Israel and Syria were teamed up to attack Judah in order to force Judah's alliance with them against Assyria. Judah refused and, instead of standing alone, appealed to Assyria for help against Israel and Syria.

Isaiah

7:1 And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, [that] Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it.

7:2 And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.

7:3 Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field;

7:4 And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah.

7:5 Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying,

7:6 Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, [even] the

son of Tabeal:

7:7 Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.

7:8 For the head of Syria [is] Damascus, and the head of Damascus [is] Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people.

7:9 And the head of Ephraim [is] Samaria, and the head of Samaria [is] Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.

When Ahaz hears about the conspiracy and the attack, he begins to fear greatly. The fear sweeps through the entire nation of Judah. All of the people's hearts are being moved like the trees in the wind; they are just sweeping back and forth from fears to fears. So God tells Isaiah to go tell them not to worry about the threats from those nations that are coming against you because I am going to stand with you, and they are going to be broken.

God tells Judah moreover that if you do fear them and believe not what I am saying to you, you will not be established. That meant that God is not going to support them if they don't believe. Well, Ahaz is not believing; his heart has turned to water. He and his people are fainting in their fear. They already have it in their minds that they are going to appeal to a pagan alliance with Assyria.

God's threat to us is the same: If we do not believe, we will not be established. It doesn't matter how many alliances we make in the flesh, we will not be established if we allow our fear of others to overcome our faith in God.

Isaiah

7:10 Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying,

7:11 Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy

God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.

7:12 But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD.

God offers to provide any kind of a sign--anything above or below. All Ahaz had to do was specify what sign he wanted to assure him of God's support. Ahaz's mind is made up, and so he refuses to name a sign on the basis of that would be tempting the Lord.

Class, if you have your own private agenda, then you can conjure up all manner of reasons for not following the Lord. Here is a vivid example of that lesson. Now, if Ahaz had specified a sign, and the sign was given, then he would be right back at the original fork in the faith road. His problem is and would still be a problem of faith.

The fork in the road would be standing with God based on the sign versus doing what his agenda of fear was. His decision had been made long before God's offer of a sign. It was to appeal to Assyria and depend on the mighty arm of human flesh. You see, Ahaz wanted to avoid re-addressing the faith/fear fork of the road. He already knew what he was going to do! So, he began to look for an excuse that would get him out of having to ask for a sign. But God gave him a sign anyway even though Ahaz would not specify one. And Isaiah said . . .

Isaiah

7:13 . . . Hear ye now, O house of David; [Is it] a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?

7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign;

And this is the sign that is later actualized in the book of Matthew.

Isaiah

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

God gives the sign to Ahaz that is fulfilled by the birth of Jesus. It is restated and fulfilled in Matthew 1.

Class, this sign was given not just to Ahaz. It was given to us. The sign stands today for every crisis that you will face during your life. Believe God for your establishment on the basis of the birth of Jesus. That means then that you can win every crisis because God fights your every battle to establish a greater eternity for you. He works all things for your good.

Our trouble with this indelible fact is that our definition of good is different from God's definition. His unlimited choice on how to spend our lives is the maximum good for us. However, we think that winning in the flesh is the maximum good. So, we want to win in the pattern of the upside down *kenosis*, but God's winning pattern is only in the *kenosis*.

Now this next verse is one that I use at home. It says,

Isaiah

7:15 Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

My wife put me on this low-fat margarine, and (laughter bubbling up all around) I pointed to this verse and said that in order to continue to be able to walk in the right path by knowing how to refuse the evil and choose the good, I've got to have real butter."

Sam: Does it say anything about biscuits? (raucous laughter)

V: I wish it did.

Isaiah

7:16 For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

This is a double entendre once again. In the space of the time of a child being born and maturing enough to know the difference

between right and wrong, Israel and Syria are going to fall to Assyria. They are already in rebellion against Assyria, and Assyria is going to wipe them out. So all Judah had to do was just stand pat. Just stand there with their faith in God, and the battle would have raged all around them, and not one thing would have happened to Judah. But Judah refused to acknowledge that God was the Lord and able to protect His own.

Isaiah had gone to the king and told him not to put his faith in foreign alliances. Instead, Isaiah said that Ahaz should put his faith in God. That command still stands today for us.

JUDAH'S ASSYRIAN CRISIS

Next we are going to be looking at Hezekiah in contrast to Ahaz.

I went to see the Assyrian display when it came to the Fort Worth museum. The brutality of the Assyrians is unspeakable. When they fought a war, it was to the death of every soldier in the enemy army. All killed or wounded enemy soldiers were systematically decapitated. The heads were piled up as big as a mountain. When they took someone alive who was not wounded and still in full health, they would impale him on a pole.

They would measure the captive, and fix a step on the pole that was sharpened at the top. They would lift the captive up, and lower him to the step with the stake going into his abdomen right under the breastbone. Then the captive would be standing there helpless even with his hands free. Because of the blood running down on the stake, he couldn't get hold of it to push himself off, and he couldn't lower himself to jump off because the point of the stake would go up into his heart. All those captives would be standing out there on the stakes waiting to die.

I was stunned to see the cruelty that Assyria did to Israel and Syria and all of its enemies. With that in mind, I had a new

respect for how Hezekiah put his faith in God and stood against the invading Assyrian army. Hezekiah's faithfulness comes in the midst of a people who are being chastised by God for their unfaithfulness.

What would God say to the Christians of America? It is a scary thought because when I compare us to Judah under Hezekiah, we don't even get in the game. They put their lives on the line; they looked down the barrel, so to speak, of the gun that is aiming at them and said in the face of certain torturous death, "We stand with God."

Now Ahaz and his people had failed the test, but the same people under another king pass the test. Courage and faith is catching. Class, be that courageous and faithful example for your family; be that example on the job; be that example in the church. Be the example of fearlessness, i.e. the example of faith—stand up! ***If you put your faith in God, you will find others, then, following your example.***

Turn with me now to chapter 36 so that we can study how Hezekiah handled the Assyrian crisis.

Isaiah

36:1 Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, [that] Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the defenced cities of Judah, and took them.

36:2 And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field

36:3 Then came forth unto him Eliakim, Hilkiah's son, which was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, Asaph's son, the recorder.

36:4 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?

Assyria's spokesman, Rabshakeh, is puzzled. Assyria has swept through the Northern

Kingdom and Syria. They are conquering everything in their path, and now they are sweeping down to the south through Judah. They have taken every city on their way to Jerusalem. They are now surrounding Jerusalem.

Judah's watchmen on the wall look out and all they see is Assyrian army encampments as far as they can see. The rest of Judah has already been defeated. All that remains is Jerusalem. The inhabitants of Jerusalem using their sight and logic can only conclude that they are all going to die. They know that Assyria is going to cut off their food and resources. They are going to wait Judah out. If you surrender, you get the stake poles. If you don't surrender, you are going to get your heads cut off.

Imagine yourself on the wall seeing this siege. This is as serious as it can get. You are surrounded, and you are going to die, and it will be a terrible death. That is the situation for Hezekiah and the remnants of Judah.

Hezekiah, in preparation for Assyria's attack, developed a conduit from the upper pool outside the city to come under the wall and all the way into the city to provide their water. Rabshakeh asks, "Where is your confidence coming from?" He is puzzled. Judah is getting ready for war that it cannot win. Jerusalem is the last city standing against the Assyrian empire.

Rabshakeh asks if they were trusting in Egypt. He declares that trust in Egypt would be to trust in a broken reed. And then he says trusting in your god will not work either because Hezekiah is out of favor with Baal because he has been tearing down Baal's altars. Rabshakeh was confusing Baal with God. He did not know that Hezekiah's faith in God caused him to start cleaning out all the idolatry when he got to be king. Ahaz put Baalism in; Hezekiah took it out. So Rabshakeh misunderstands Hezekiah's trust in God.

Then Rabshakeh offers Judah a bribe; there has got to be some doubt in Rabshakeh's mind because of Judah's continued confidence in the face of siege. He said, "I tell you what I want to do. I want to give you 2000 horses if you've got 2000 men to put on them." Then, in verse 10, Rabshekeh says,

36:10 . . . the LORD said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.

Anybody can claim that the Lord told him to do something. Here is an example where a pagan who worships the gods of Assyria claims that the Lord told him to go up and wipe out Judah. Rabshakeh doesn't know the Lord, and his claim is empty.

Then the Jews that were in discussion with Rabshakeh, requested that he not talk in Hebrew. The Jews did not want the threat against Judah to be known by the population because it might weaken their resolve. They instead ask Rabshakeh to speak in Assyrian. But Rabshakeh refused and declared that he would holler out his words in the Hebrew tongue so that everybody can hear the threat against their lives. That is what he does, and he says in verse 14 . . .

Isaiah

36:14 . . . Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you.

36:15 Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD,

At this point, Rabshakeh has commanded that Judah not trust in God, the opposite of what God commands. So we come on down here to verse 18 where Rabshakeh challenges God:

Isaiah

36:18 [Beware] lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, The LORD will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?

36:19 Where [are] the gods of Hamath and Arphad? where [are] the gods of

Sepharvaim? and have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?

36:20 Who [are they] among all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?

36:21 But they held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not.

By Hezekiah's staying quiet, he was acknowledging that the war was now between the Assyrians and God. When God is challenged, we don't have to answer and defend God. God can do that very well. Hezekiah's faith was in God, not the strong arms of flesh. He had God's promise that they were going to be delivered so they were going to just stand there and watch for that deliverance. They had already rejected a pagan alliance. Now for the final battle, they openly put their faith in God.

Class, when somebody challenges our faith in God, then the challenge goes against God's command for our faith to be in Him. The fight now becomes God's fight, and our faith then requires us to stand fast and silent and watch God fight His fight. If we don't stand fast in our faith in God, then we must fight our own battles in our own strength.¹

Let's move on to Isaiah 37:1: When Rabshakeh's threat dawns as a real possibility in Hezekiah's mind, he rent his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth and went into

¹ Dying grace comes at just this kind of faith challenge. When Antichrist threatens to torture and kill you if you do not worship him by taking his mark, the threat is one that extends to God because it attempts to break your faith in God. God commands us to trust in Him, but Antichrist is commanding the opposite. By refusing to take the mark, God will fight for you. He will either deliver you from the hands of Antichrist, or He will give you dying grace, i.e. the ability to go through the torture and death. Furthermore, dying grace includes your deliverance from the second death. Also you get a front row seat at the final victory over Antichrist when God casts him into the Lake of Fire.

the house of the Lord.² Seeking reassurances, he sends for Isaiah. Isaiah sends word back to Hezekiah . . .

Isaiah

37:6 . . . Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.

37:7 Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

And then Rabshakeh returned to Assyria and found out that King Senacherib was fighting a war with Libnah and another war with Ethiopia. So, he does not want to fight a war against Jerusalem too. So, he sends a letter to Hezekiah in verse 10:

Isaiah

37:10 . . . Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, . . .

Rabshakeh is accusing God of being a deceiver. However, Satan is the deceiver, and he is using Rabshakeh to do it.

Isaiah

37:10 . . . saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.

Then Hezekiah goes in to the Temple to consult God in prayer.

Isaiah

37:14 And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.

37:15 And Hezekiah prayed unto the LORD, saying,

37:16 O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest [between] the cherubims,

² This fear is similar to Peter's fear upon his looking down at the water upon which he was walking. The enemy of faith is sight and the imaginations that it conjures up.

thou [art] the God, [even] thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth.

37:17 Incline thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open thine eyes, O LORD, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God.

37:18 Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries,

37:19 And have cast their gods into the fire: for they [were] no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them.

37:20 Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou [art] the LORD, [even] thou only.

Okay, in this private prayer, Hezekiah is beseeching God for reassurance. He spread Sennacherib's letter out before God. He then rehearses all the conquests of Sennacherib. Notice the part there at the end of this prayer, to deliver us and let the world know that it is You that did it so that the world would know that the Lord is the only God.

Isaiah sends the Word of God to Hezekiah. This exemplifies more of the prophet's personal ministry in verse 21:

Isaiah

37:21 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria:

37:22 This [is] the word which the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, [and] laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.

37:23 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.

Now Isaiah is really drawing a huge contrast. He is saying that as Judah is compared

to the mighty army of Assyria is like a virgin daughter scorning the entire Assyrian empire. And this one little daughter is going to look out there at all those Assyrian soldiers of war, and she is going to laugh and shake her head because this virgin is Judah, the daughter of God. And who is going to do the fighting? The Holy One of Israel is Who!

It is kind of like your standing against the demons, and the Lord Jesus standing right behind you. Even though demons have supernatural power and could just wipe you out if you were alone. However, when you are standing with the Lord, the Lord's power is backing you up. So, when you practice spiritual warfare, the Lord is backing your play. It isn't you alone that is defeating the devil and his army; your power to defeat him comes from your Yokemate.

Now we really need to get this scenario in our minds: Judah is looking down the barrel of a gun. This is not pretend stuff. It is not mythological stuff. It is not like sitting in an air-conditioned room reading about this stuff. They are there. They are facing it. This is the real thing, and Judah chooses to trust God with their fate.

Isaiah

37:35 For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

37:36 Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they [were] all dead corpses.

God did not fail their trust. The Lord killed 185,000 Assyrian warriors during that night. It is hard to even imagine that many warriors encamped around Jerusalem. Bang! The angel of the Lord killed them. Angels have supernatural power in their own selves. But when they are sent on mission from God,

God backs them up the same way as He backs us up.³

And then Sennacherib gallops back to Ninevah to escape the death of his army. But he does not escape. His sons kill him with a sword. God said that he would return in the same way that he had advanced. He advanced via killing with the sword, and he retreated to be killed with the sword.

GOD EXTENDS HEZEKIAH'S LIFE

Isaiah

38:1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.

38:2 Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the LORD,

38:3 And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done [that which is] good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

38:4 Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah, saying,

38:5 Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years.

38:6 And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city.

38:7 And this [shall be] a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken;

38:8 Behold, I will bring again the

shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.

38:9 The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness:

The rest of the passage is his meditations on dying. This is some good reading here, but I am not going to focus on that. What I want to focus on is the extension of life by God: how long the extension was, the sign that was granted by God, the description of Hezekiah before the extension, and his description after the extension.

1. Hezekiah had his life extended
2. The extension was for 15 years.
3. The sign was the reversing of time by 10 degrees on the sundial.
4. Before the extension Hezekiah was one of the best kings that Judah had ever had.
5. After the extension, Hezekiah was proud and showed off his possessions to Merodach-Baladan of Babylon.

Hezekiah did real good until he got sick unto death. When God extended his life and he knew how long the extension was, Hezekiah's personality changed to one of pride and showing off.

Merodach-Baladan (Isaiah 39:1) is the son of the king of Babylon. He comes to bring tidings to Hezekiah who was suffering in his great illness. Hezekiah takes him throughout his kingdom and shows him all the gold, silver, spices, and armaments of Judah. This was a prideful thing of revealing the private things that belong to God.

Hezekiah's prideful act gets him into trouble with God. Isaiah asks him what did he show to Merodach-Baladan. Hezekiah confessed that he had shown everything. Isaiah said, "Therefore everything that has been built and stored up for Judah will be taken from Judah and sent into Babylon.

³ When Gabriel was sent to deliver a message to His prophet, Satan withstood him from accomplishing the task. God chose to send Michael to help Gabriel instead of using His power to give victory to Gabriel. Thus we see that God uses different means at different times. I think that He often tests us by choosing to let us fight to our very limits before He steps in.

They will take everything including all of your sons who will be used as eunuch slaves for the king of Babylon.” And then Hezekiah says . . .

Isaiah
39:8 . . . Good [is] the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days.

The prophet has expressed doom for the nation of Judah. But Hezekiah reveals his selfishness in his response to Isaiah: “Oh, God is so good. All those bad things are going to happen after I am gone.”

This turn-around is huge. Hezekiah goes from the top, as a good king, down to this! If that is what it costs to get your life extended, we don't want our lives extended because Hezekiah loses everything. I don't want to lose everything. Paul was always in dread of messing up. He wanted to stay right with the Lord, and this is something that I want and you want.

Let's go back to chapter 7:17-25. Assyria is going to be invading Judah under the time of Ahaz because he chose to make an alliance rather than trust God. They now must pay the price for their lack of trust. They made their alliance in order to keep from being attacked, but now they must pay the price because lack of faith in God has great costs. Here is what happens when you make an alliance in order to short circuit your having to stand with God and be willing to take a hit if God chooses to let you take a hit. You are His child whom He loves very much. He may let you fight, or He may let you die, or He may fight your fight for you. He knows what He is doing, and ***what He chooses is for your very best***. It is His choice, but if we take His choice away by choosing the alliance, we eliminate the third alternative of His fighting for us, ***and*** we still take a greater hit.

God warns Judah that Assyria is now going to be coming like a bee and a razor and

a flood. All the rest of that chapter is dealing with Assyria coming in and invading Judah.

Helen: The leader made all the difference between God's retribution versus His fighting for His people in this crisis. What about today?

V: It still holds true in federalism. But now under the New Covenant, it holds true for the individual too. The difference between Ahaz and Hezekiah was the difference between dark and light. Under Ahaz the temples of Baal were kept in place. Baal worship was promoted, and the idea of depending upon human alliances with pagans was prevalent. So there was a loss of allegiance to God by the people through bad leadership.

Come over to Hezekiah. The nation was the same except there was a sweeping out of all the idols. There is a turning of trust back to God and away from pagan alliances. The nation's leadership was exactly opposite. The top down principle of blessing is called the federation principle, e.g. when a head of the house is a godly man, the children are blessed, not because they deserve it, but because the head is a godly man. When the governor of a state is a godly man, the citizens of the state are blessed, not because they deserve it, not because they are saved, but simply because the governor is a godly man. And when the president of the nation is a godly man, the nation, the citizens of the nation are blessed. It doesn't matter if they are saved or lost or anything else, they are blessed through the federation principle. The king, or the head of something, brings blessing to everybody below him if he is a godly man.

Now the reverse is just as true. When the head of the house is an ungodly man, the children are cursed, not because they deserve it but just because the head of the house is a wicked man. Curses and blessings come from the top down under the federation principle.

If you are in a company and your company manager is a righteous and holy man, you will be blessed. Blessings just rain down on you. But if your boss is a wicked man, you can be as righteous as the day is long, but you will receive undeserved curses on your job.

Louie: What if you have an evil president in your company, but your manager underneath that evil guy is good. Does that mean that you are going to be blessed?

V: Yes, you will receive limited curses. Now, take this for example, let's say that the top is good, and the middle is good, you receive maximum blessing. However, if the top is bad and the middle is good, the middle will shield you from some of the curses coming down. But the middle takes the curses.

Trouble: When everybody on top is bad and the curses come down. I still must stand fast with the Lord regardless of cursings.

V: Exactly, because there is always going to be somebody that you are going to be the protector of, maybe just a spectator. It is your job to pass out blessings. And you are going to take the hit to shield those that you are blessing.

Trouble: We ought to be glad to be able to take the hits for them.

V: That's right. Jesus Christ is our example. He took the main hit.

Terry: I see where Hezekiah's stand was for God, and the blessings came to his nation. Then he changed during his life's extension when he became vain and proud. That brought God's curses to the entire nation.

V: Yes, I think that when Hezekiah's life was extended he misinterpreted that blessing. He could have kept on being just like he was, but he didn't. He began to think: "Maybe I am special because God extended my life." The next thing you know he is starting to

show off his treasures as if they were his instead of God's.

Terry: That is a good example for us who are called by God into the ministry when the ministry is blessed and grows and God is doing mighty works. At some point, we could take our eyes off God and put them on ourselves.

V: Yep. I've seen it happen to some of our best students.

Joe: Instead of the guy at the bottom having a bad attitude because of curses coming down on him, he should have a good attitude by choosing to trust the Lord and work for Him and be humble.

V: Yes, Christians should be willing to take the hit for others by being faithful to the Lord.

Mr. Gulley: We take for granted that blessings will always be material and physical in this temporal realm.

V: You are right. We tend to interpret God's promises of blessing as temporal, physical, and material.

Vertis: God wants us to shine the light into the dark, and we may have to take some hits from it, but those hits will bring light to other people.

V: Being the light in the middle of darkness is exactly what Jesus did. Jesus came to the darkness. He was the light, and they rejected the light because they loved darkness. He took the maximum hit in order to bring God's maximum light to us in the dark. That is what we are to do. You are to go into all the world and take light into the darkness. Being a blessing to others costs us just like it cost Jesus.

Freddy: This is why the Lord said pick up your cross and follow Him. Jesus said that the first will be last, and the last will be first. So we must be willing to be servants. We

might be last here but we are going to be first there.

V: That is right. The bigger the hit you take, the bigger the firstness you will get.

**GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS TO
ISAIAH HIMSELF AS A PERSON**
(Isaiah 8:11-13)

Class, you can take these straight into your heart because these are instructions to you as well.

1. Do not walk like the people.

Isaiah

8:11 For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying,

2. Do not promote confederacy.

Isaiah

8:12 Say ye not, A confederacy, to all [them to] whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

Do not try to link a Christian to a pagan in any way in order to enhance that Christian's position. You do not form a partnership with some pagan in order to enhance your position.

Stewart: That covers a lot of ground.

V: Yes. Some of us begin to think that we will just partner with a group because we have the same theology on a singular point. Alliances like that fall in line with your needing the strong arm of human flesh or political alliances to advance your cause. You don't need that. All you need is God in taking your stand. Don't fear and doubt when looking down the barrel of that gun (this is easy for me to say, but I confess that it is hard to do.). However, God says, "Don't worry about that threat. Let me fight for you." Remember that He killed 185,000 Assyrian warriors in one night. You don't need political alliances; you don't need the strong

arm of fleshly alliances. All we need is faith in God as we take our stands.

Ken: At this time America is seeking alliances with Arab countries.

V: Yeah, A Christian nation partnering with Islam nations parallels with Judah partnering with Assyria.

3. Do not fear political power.

Isaiah

8:12 . . . neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

4. Fear God.

Isaiah

8:13 Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and [let] him [be] your fear, and [let] him [be] your dread.

Verse 14 tells Isaiah, Judah, and me that God is either my sanctuary or my stumbling stone.

Isaiah

8:14 And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

So you can follow these four instructions that are given to Isaiah and have the Lord as your sanctuary, or you can reject any of these four, and then you have the Lord as your stumbling stone. You have to choose; it is one or the other. You can't have them both where you can reject all the Lord's commands and then have Him as your sanctuary.

THE LAW OF THE HARVEST
(Isaiah 8:16-22)

1. The Word of God is available to disciples.

Isaiah

8:16 Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.

2. The Word of God is no longer available to the house of Judah.

Isaiah

8:17 And I will wait upon the LORD,
that hideth his face from the house of
Jacob, and I will look for him.

God's hiding His Face from us is a hard thing. Think about this for a minute. The Word of God is available to you disciples (I am trying to draw a parallel), but the Word of God is not available to the whole Christian church.

John: There are some without hope?

V: Yes, the hope is available, but they don't have it. Now here is the thing: for you to understand the Word of God, you have to be following God as a true, sacrificial-cross-bearing disciple.

Larry: Hope is for those on the *kenosis* in their sanctification journeys.

V: Yes. If you reject the costs of discipleship, you will not have the light of God. Jesus said, "He that followeth Me will be in the light. If he doesn't follow Me, he will be in the darkness, and if he says he has fellowship with Me, he is a liar and the truth is not in him."⁴ To be His disciple, you must deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow the Lord.⁵ If you don't follow Him, you will not have the light of God's Word to see by. You cannot understand it, and you will become like the baby in the book of Hebrews that needs to be taught again and again because you are on the milk. You will always be re-laying the foundation of salvation. That is why you have so many people get baptized over and over again. In Sunday school, they say, "I can't do any ministry. Don't ask me to pray. I can't pray in public. Don't ask me to read the Bible; don't even look at me when you ask a question." These folks are not following God. And if you don't follow God, on His terms, you'll stay a baby. But if you follow God, you will be a fisher of men. Now

this precept is signed, sealed, and delivered. It is unbreakable. If you are not a fisher of men, then you are not a disciple. And if you are not a disciple, there is no understanding the Word of God.

3. The Word of God is replaced by familiar spirits and wizards.

Isaiah

8:18 Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me [are] for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.

8:19 And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?

Horoscopes and palm reading take the place of Scripture. Channeling is trying to contact the dead. Wasn't it in the news that our First Lady was getting counsel from Mrs. Roosevelt, a former first lady who has been dead for many years?

4. Those speaking not in accord with the Word of God have no light in them.

Isaiah

8:20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, [it is] because [there is] no light in them.

5. They will be hungry and in darkness.

Isaiah

8:21 And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward.

8:22 And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and [they shall be] driven to darkness.

These five principles cannot be defied. They are called the Law of the Harvest.

⁴ 1 John 1:6-7

⁵ Matthew 16:24

All of these tragedies are going to come down on Judah. Invasion by Assyria, all of the fenced cities tumbling one by one until the Assyrians are surrounding Jerusalem. All of the pressure, struggles, fear, and threats are redemptive in purpose. They are not punitive; God's purpose is to redeem His people, i.e. to turn the people's hearts back to Himself. God is bringing this to pass not so they will be attacked and quake in their boots and stammer and stutter and suffer. His purpose is to turn the hearts of the people toward Himself.

Now, if it takes the pain and suffering from attacks and pressures from pagans to get the hearts of the people, it is worthwhile. So many of us do not understand the purpose behind the pressures that come down on us. The purpose is not to smash you down. The purpose is to turn your heart toward God. Certainly, it is not to say that your heart is far from the Lord. Even if you are following the Lord, the purpose is to draw you even closer to the Lord. God's purpose is not punitive for His children. God uses the rod of discipline for redemptive purposes (Thy rod and thy staff, they *comfort* me [Psalm 23]).

God explains that He is going to be using Assyria to discipline His child. Now the purpose is to turn that child's heart towards Him. Assyria, the rod of discipline in God's Hand, might think that since it is doing the hitting on the errant nation, then it is right and the victim is wrong, that the rod is better than the child. You may even end up being a rod somewhere along the way where God uses you on another child. Don't get to thinking that you are righteous because you are the rod. That will be falling into the same trap as Hezekiah's pride. God uses many kinds of rods: some are other saints, but some are Satan's people. And when He uses the rod, it is not God's judgment that the rod is righteous and the child is unrighteous. That is not the issue. He uses what He wants to use to draw that child's heart closer to Him.

Tom: All the earthquakes could be God's efforts to draw us back to Him.

Jerry: The scientists blame it on nature and forget about God.

V: I never hear God being identified with disasters. It is always nature, and God is excluded from the conversation. But God has purpose even in tragedies. Redemption under the reign of Antichrist will come with great pain and suffering. Suffering under the Lord's discipline is comforting when you can see the hope on the other side, but it is galling when you can't see the hope.

Helen: If we understand that the Antichrist is the rod in God's hands, then we will not expect to be excluded from that suffering.

V: Right! That is good, Helen. Many of us think that we should be excluded from sufferings because we are Christians. We think that God would exclude His children from suffering. Instead, we should know that God is not a respecter of persons, and He disciplines every child that He loves in order to perfect us. If we are not yet perfect, then expect some discipline.

THE MEANINGS OF THE NAMES THAT ISAIAH GIVES TO THE MESSIAH (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Isaiah

9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: 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.

1. Wonderful Counselor (a wonderful administrator)

This is a person who is going to govern like we have never seen before. Justice will be achieved.

2. The mighty God (supremacy).
3. The everlasting Father (eternal care).
4. The Prince of Peace (harmony).

Okay, one more verse, and then we will be through.

Isaiah

9:7 Of the increase of [his] government and peace [there shall be] no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from hence-

forth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

I want you to ponder these words: "of the increase of His government there shall be no end." That indicates to me that His kingdom will be an eternally growing kingdom. You figure that out. If you can't, then take my course on the Book of Revelation.

Chapter Questions

1. Who had his life extended by God, how long was it extended, what sign was granted, and then describe this person before the extension and afterward.
2. What are God's instructions to Isaiah himself as a person. Isaiah 8:11-13.
3. What is the Law of the harvest in chapter 8.
4. What are the meanings of the names that Isaiah gives to the Messiah (verses 6 and 7).

Chapter 6

APOSTASY OF THE LEADERS

Last week we studied Isaiah's ministry to the leaders who were causing Judah's apostasy. It would be one thing if apostasy grew out of the grass-roots level and went upwards, but in Judah's case, the apostasy was top-down. We talked about how the kings caused good and bad things via their leadership of the people. When there was a good king, good things happened to the people, but bad things happened to the people when there was a bad king.

Turn with me to Isaiah chapter 9. Here we will find described the apostasy, which the leaders brought to the land. There will be 7 items here.

JUDAH'S APOSTASY DESCRIBED

1. The leaders cause error (Isaiah 9:16).
2. The followers are destroyed (Isaiah 9:16).
Isaiah
9:16 For the leaders of this people cause [them] to err; and [they that are] led of them [are] destroyed.
3. God does not excuse followers just because their intentions are good (Isaiah 9:17).
4. God does not set aside the Law of the Harvest (Isaiah 9:17).
Isaiah
9:17 Therefore the Lord shall have no joy in their young men, neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows: for every one [is] an hypocrite and an evil-doer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand [is] stretched out still.
5. God is ready to forgive (Isaiah 9:17, & 21).

6. Wickedness goes through the land like a fire (Isaiah 9:18).

Isaiah

9:18 For wickedness burneth as the fire: it shall devour the briars and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest, and they shall mount up [like] the lifting up of smoke.

7. God will still receive His people's repentance (Isaiah 9:21).

Isaiah

9:21 Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh: [and] they together [shall be] against Judah. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand [is] stretched out still.

Apostasy number 3 threatens me. When the leaders are wrong, and you follow the leaders, the retribution is not turned away even if you have good intentions. It does not matter that you don't intend to be bad. It does not matter what your intentions are. What matters is what you actually do. That threatens me. We are accountable for what we do and what we say, but the leaders are accountable for more than their own selves, they are accountable for those who follow their leads. Also just because God's wrath comes down on the leader does not mean that it is turned away from the good intentioned followers. Following bad leadership does not absolve us from our errors.

I want you to see this now. You can intend from the bottom of your feet to the top of your head to do right, but if you are ignorantly doing wrong in obedience to those in authority over you, you are going to reap destruction.

We must not follow an evil leader even when everyone's intentions are good. We must follow God. But then a conflict will

arise between you and the evil leader, and you must be willing to accept the consequences for following the Lord.

Billy: So what they should be doing is telling their leader he is doing wrong.

V: Yes, that is the prophetic function that every Christian has.

Raymond: It says in Ezekiel¹ that the watchman should warn the people when they see the enemies coming. If he does not warn the people, then their blood is going to be required at the watchman's hands. It is kind of like that in this case. If they see them following a leader in doing wrong, but they don't say anything to them, . . .

V: . . . yes, we are all watchmen, and we cannot be silent when our church leaders or our government leaders are leading our churches or our nation astray. We must exercise our prophetic functions.

Trouble: Last week we talked about the pyramid effect; you know one guy takes the blows like an umbrella to shield those below him. But now it is saying the followers are receiving the punishment just as well as the leader. How does that go together?

V: In the pyramid, the leader down in the middle of the hierarchy may shield those below him from curses coming from above. The top leader brings curses for the whole organization, but those who have been shielded by a good leader in their department will still suffer problems that hit the whole organization, but they will be shielded from some of the problems. Also, if followers do evil with good intentions, they will suffer and spread curses from their own deeds regardless of protection from above. We receive no protection from our own evil deeds

In American government, a bad president can cause the entire country to fail, but a

particular state governor can shield the citizens of his state from many of the problems that other states have. However, when the country fails, everybody, even the good governors and the citizens in his state, suffer the collapse.

Terry: A good president's blessings also come on down through the states.

V: That's right. Both the blessings and the cursings come down from the leader.

Terry: Verse 12 says, "For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand [is] stretched out still." Verse 17 and 10:4 and 10:21 say much the same thing. I think God is telling us that no matter what, there is still hope.

V: Yes, it is never too late to repent. Right now the Lord's hand is extended out to us in this room, to our churches, to this state, to this nation, and to the Christians around the world. He is reaching out, but I must also tell you that He is not going to turn away His curses unless we repent from our silence. When we read the Book of Revelation, the curses that come are spelled out. You will see how Christians are going to pay dearly for our current neglect of watchman duty! It makes me angry to see the Christians thinking that everything is going good. They can neither see our ongoing destruction nor hear our urgent warnings. My grandchildren are going to have to pay dearly in this world because we are not stepping up and speaking out and taking some hits for them. Your children are going to have all their freedoms taken away, and I believe it is going to be in their lifetime that they are going to have their heads cut off if they stand up for Christ. Who is at fault? Second Chronicles 7:14 says clearly that the Church is at fault:

2 Chronicles

7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from

¹ Ezekiel 3:17-21, 33:1-19.

heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

The land is getting sicker by the minute. It is God's people who are called by His name who are the least likely people to humble themselves! We are self righteous, good church people without fault in our own eyes. We are not turning from our wicked ways. Malachi came to God's people and said, "You people have done evil here and evil there." And they ask in their self righteousness, "How have we done those things; we've never done anything like that!" They called God a liar! And the same thing is going on today. It is time for us to step up now and be the people and act like the people that we are. Don't back off of your confession. Say it out loud everywhere you go. Get up on the roof of your house and holler it out.

Billy: Did you say that good fellowship was a prophetic function?

V: Yes. Good fellowship is following the leader when he is going in the right direction. But when the leader is leading wrong, good fellowship demands our outspokenness of warnings to the people and to the leader. Good fellowship of good leaders is a loud proclamation to others to follow also. Verbal warnings and exemplary actions are parts of our prophetic function.

Let's turn to Isaiah 13 and look at the nine burdens.

THE BURDENS THAT SINFUL JUDAH MUST CARRY

1. The burden of Babylon (the upside down kenosis) (see Chart 6.2)

Now when you read about Babylon in the Bible, there is a double entendre there that you must grasp. In the Old Testament, it is the geographical empire headquartered in Babylon that is in the present nation of Iraq. Babylon was the capital city of the Babylonian empire. It was the empire that conquered

Judah and took it captive until the Medes conquered Babylon, and the Persians swallowed up the Medes.

Cyrus, the Persian king released the Jews from captivity to go back and restore the Promised Land. When the Jews came back, they had to totally rebuild the walls around Jerusalem, which was an uninhabited wasteland. However, they had to defend themselves from the Palestinians as they built the wall. It was Nehemiah who led in this effort. Ever since the Jews rebuilt Jerusalem with the jealous Palestinians fighting them every day of their work in restoring the Promised Land, there has been a problem between the Israelis and the Palestinians. It is still going on today.

Nehemiah led a group back to build the wall of defense as a prerequisite for the re-inhabiting of the Promised Land. Malachi came back to preach to those returning exiles from Babylon, and the Jews were just going hog wild in revival. Malachi said, "This is a false revival because you are not repenting of your sins."

Today, we are looking for revival, and everywhere I turn somebody is talking about how this great wonderful revival is going to come. I tell you that this anticipated revival is going to be a false revival that is actually going to lead to Antichrist. He is going to tolerate the Christians for a while, and then when he has had enough of them, he is going to start executing them. His purpose will be to totally annihilate the Christians. If it is not you to suffer this curse, it is going to be your children or grandchildren.

Surely, you don't want that terrible persecution for your children. I don't want it! I want to draw close to the Lord, be the salt and light, and do my prophetic function toward changing the minds of our leaders. Why don't we warn this country? We don't even warn our churches! Why don't we change this city? We run around ducking and hiding, and fooling the people into thinking that we

are not Christians or at least Christians who are just like the non-Christians.

I hear people say that they are not called to witness. They say that they are not going to buttonhole anybody! They describe witnessing in the worst possible way as buttonholing somebody.

Raymond: We are always sending missionaries out to other lands. We need to start right here.

V: Raymond, it is not an either or decision. We should witness everywhere in the whole world. We need to use Gospel tracts to supplement our witnessing and preaching. There ought to be wall-to-wall tracts in this city. You ought not to be able to go anywhere without stumbling over a tract.

Helen: One of the local churches has a sign on the exit door that says: "You are now entering a mission field."

V: Yeahhhh! That is the way it is supposed to be. When you go to the grocery store, you are on mission. When you go to work, you are on mission. When you go anywhere, to run an errand, you are on mission. Witness everywhere you go. Distribute Gospel tracts everywhere.

The other meaning of Babylon is that it is the world system. The world system is built on the success and prosperity that the Jews experienced during their captivity in Babylon. Thus the double entendre of Babylon is the geographical empire in the Old Testament and the world system in the New Testament. In the book of Revelation, it is Babylon, the world system that is embodied in the American Dream that falls. Who is going to be agonizing the most over the world system falling? The church! The church is going to weep: Oh, our money and our comforts are gone down the tubes, and we can't meet our financial requirements. Well, it doesn't take a penny to be the church. We are the church!

Lois: It would stop our building program.

V: Yes, it is liable to stop our building programs, and we'll probably weep and cry over the physical plant but not the people.

In chapter 13 there is the introduction of a double entendre that is going to be linked to the book of Revelation in a heavy way. Some of the words are identical. In verse 6, "Howl ye; for the day of the LORD [is] at hand"; the day of the Lord is going to be the great white throne judgment, and that is in the book of Revelation. Then when you come down to verse 10, it says "For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine." That is the sixth seal and the fourth trumpet described in the book of Revelation. So you see there is a lot of linkage here, very close ties even to the actual wording of the phraseology is even the same.

When we move over to verse 21, still in chapter 13, we come into the picture of the demons that are going to be encamped about the world system: "But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in [their] pleasant palaces: and her time [is] near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged."

The description above of the demonic world system is also in Revelation 18. Now it is all right for you to think in terms of these demonic intrusions into the world system because the prince of the world system runs the world system, and he has a right to use his helpers in his own world system, but when you open the doors of the church and bring that in to the church, guess what comes in with that world system. Then, you will have the dragons, the doleful creatures, and the satyrs dancing around in your church. If your members like the world system more than

holiness, then they will bring all that demonic junk into the church. When things go hay-wire, don't ask how it happened. You are neglecting in *kenotic* sanctification. Worldliness is overwhelming holiness in your church. You and your flock liked the world system which system is under the charge of the prince of the world.

We shouldn't be bringing the world system into our churches. Our churches ought to stand apart. You are a called-out people who were taken out of the world system, to be holy people. You were cleaned from sin and set aside for God's exclusive use. It is the same for your meeting house, the same for your assembly, the same for everything that you do; every breath that you take belongs to God.

When we decide that we want to use the world's system to grow ourselves and our church, then our protection from the demonic breaks down. That same decision gave the Jews their first human king. The Jews did not like being under God's kingship. Instead, they wanted a human king like those in the world system.

The king of Babylon is mentioned in verse 4 of the next chapter. Whenever you see king in the Bible it can be referencing good or bad. When it is a bad king, he represents the devil and Antichrist. Antichrist is going to be the final bad king (Isaiah 14:4).

The king of Babylon, in that chapter, has hell as his destination (v.9). Why does the king of Babylon go to hell? Well, let's take a look at Lucifer in verse 12.

Isaiah

14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! [how] art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

14:13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

14:14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

14:15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

14:16 They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, [and] consider thee, [saying, Is] this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;

14:17 [That] made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; [that] opened not the house of his prisoners?

The goal of the world system is to elevate oneself in power, riches, and grandeur (see Chart 6.1 depicting the Opposite of the *Kenosis*). Satan is the prince of the world system. The bad kings of the world's system are pawns in the hands of Satan. And many

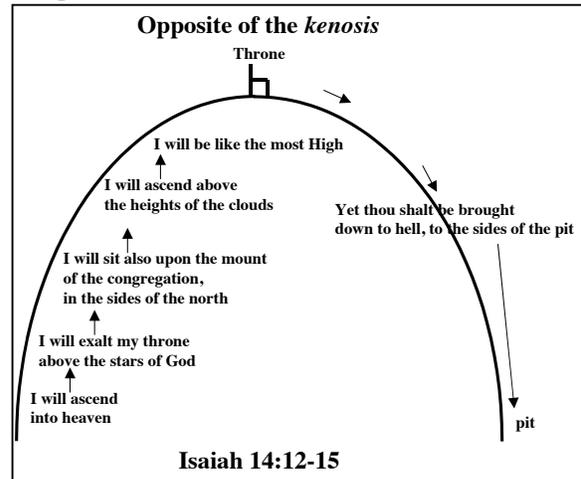


Chart 6.1

times I can't tell the difference between the king and Satan. It looks to me like there is an intermingling, and sometimes God talks about the king as if the king himself were Satan. That identification of the king with Satan, then, leads us to Antichrist.

Now one of the things that these evil kings don't know is that they are pawns in the hands of the devil. They think they are doing everything right. They gather together their counselors and make decisions based on the wisdom of the world. They, think that they are doing everything as good as it can be

done. But the wisdom of the world is foolishness to God.

The highest form of foolishness is to dethrone God and enthrone a sinner in His place. This picture of the king of Babylon and Satan is one of self-elevation. Satan says, I will ascend, and I will put my throne up here with God’s throne. Yes, I will ascend all the way up to heaven, and I will have my throne right side by side with God. But God declares that Satan will be brought down to the pit. This is the fall that comes after elevation in the upside down *kenosis* (refer back to Chart 6.1).

What we are called to is just the opposite of Satan’s goal. It is to go down in a life of sacrifice. Be humble, and be a servant to all. Don’t exalt yourself; sacrifice yourself. This path of sacrificial service is the product of holiness (see Chart 6.2). If you will be a holy

good lives in their kingdoms. The land and its productiveness was destroyed because they chose the wisdom of this world by which to govern.

Isaiah

14:18 All the kings of the nations, [even] all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. . . .

The king of Babylon or Satan is going to be brought down even lower than they. He will be like a carcass trodden under feet.

Towards the end of this chapter, there is the flying serpent (v. 29). The flying serpent that flies along is like a fiery dart. Fiery darts are being thrown into your mind all the time. You are to do battle, spiritual battle, with these darts. When they come in, you are to catch them with the shield of faith and quench them, not let them take root and start a forest fire in your mind and drive you over the edge

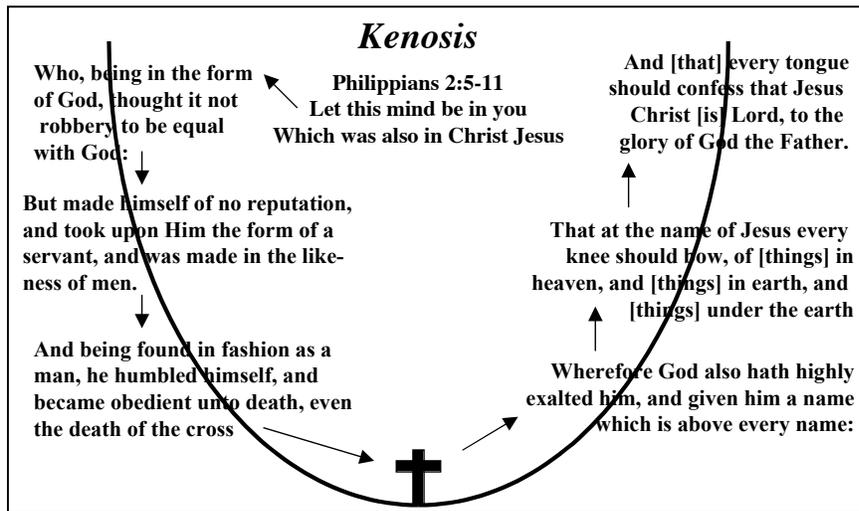
where you are liable to do crazy things.

Verse 31 describes the next trumpet, the 5th trumpet in the book of Revelation. This trumpet is about the smoke. There is a great deal of connection between the book of Revelation and the book of Isaiah.

Let me give you some references on the prince of the world system:

Luke 10:18 connects with Revelation 12:8-9. This is the prince of the world system being cast down to earth.

Ezekiel 28 (the whole chapter) talks about the king of Tyre, a reference to the devil. Many times, when the Bible is speaking of a bad king, I have a hard time figuring out if he is talking about Satan himself or the king. They link so tightly together that I can’t get them apart to see which it is. It is almost like



servant in this world, you will be exalted in eternity, like King Jesus. Have this mind in you; the mind of Jesus Who chose the *kenosis* as His path. That is what He is calling us to do.

The kings who are remembered for their glory as they lie in their tombs will be resurrected to disgrace and dishonor. Their choices of the world system destroyed the

they are the same. So the king of Tyre is considered a cherub that had many jewels, beauty, and power. So it is clear that this view is of the devil.

Jack: I think that the confusion arises when the king has the mind of Satan.

V: Good point, Jack. The mind of Satan is opposite to the mind of Christ. Satan's mind, then, would be the upside down *kenosis*.

The bad king is under Satan's control because the king is of the world system in such a way that Satan can move him about, while the guy thinks that he is doing right. It is an awesome thing that anyone following the world system thinks that he is doing right when he is actually behaving under the mind of Satan.

Daniel 7:1-8. These kings are considered to be like Satan.

Larry: In the *kenosis* passage, we are commanded to have the mind of Christ. These kings being described have that *kenosis* turned over, and have the mind of Satan.

V: Yes, that is what Jack was speaking of. What I want everybody in here to see and understand clearly is that the mind of Satan is very subtle, and you can have the mind of Satan and be intending good. Just like Peter did. When the Lord said, "I've got to go to Jerusalem and be killed," Peter said, "Oh, no, no, no. Don't go to Jerusalem and be killed!" Jesus then said, "Get behind me, Satan, because your mind is on the things of this world, not the things of God."

So, you see, Peter was right there being a good, loyal friend, but at that moment, he was being a pawn in the hands of Satan. And so you and I are in danger of having our good intentions used by Satan. If we think, the mind of Satan is so dark and terrible that we couldn't possibly have the mind of Satan, then we are blind to our own evil. Because,

once you think like that, you are defenseless, and you will have the mind of Satan. So, you see, it is critical that we all get this.

Matthew

4:8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

4:9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

In this third temptation, the devil is tempting the Lord to take the easy road to a kingdom. We are prone to rejecting both the long laborious roads and also our self-denying sacrifices. All you have to do is worship the devil by rejecting God's difficult path and accepting Satan's easy compromising path. Satan lures us off path with his lying offer of the wide easy road to our heart's desires. He promises to give you the whole thing if you will just adopt his path of ascension on the reverse *kenosis* to be enthroned as the king of the world. The devil tempts all of us with shortcuts.

Worshiping the devil could be very subtle. You don't have to murder people, rob people, go to a satanic church, engage in human sacrifice, and do all manner of evil like that to be following the devil. All you have to do is devote your life to church, family, career, sports, and good citizenship. By devoting yourself to the pursuit of the good life, the American Dream, you will have bought into the world's system because this is to forsake the larger principle of holiness, i.e. being a cleansed vessel separated unto God's sole use.

Helen: Satan offers quick and easy, temporal rewards—God offers long and difficult, eternal rewards. Man always wants . . .

V: . . . the easy now.

Helen: Man is a "now" person. Satan uses man's nature to get man to do what he wants him to do. God wants us to focus on

the long-term benefit of serving Him rather than ourselves via the world system.

V: Yes! Temptation number 3, the last temptation of the Lord, is one that we have all succumbed to at some time.

Joe: Isn't this temptation meant by the Lord saying that he who would find his life was going to lose it and whoever loses his life for My sake is going to find it.²

V: Yes. That temptation is the strongest one thrown at Jesus. And when the devil came at each of us with the world system, you and I have fallen. We have fallen over and over again. We need to get back up and toughen ourselves with some self-discipline. Some of us scramble to our feet and get up and then bang, we're right back down again. Some of us camp out down there and think that we are doing great! We even think: "Why can't all the Christians be as good as us?"

Please know that going against the mindset of the world (Satan's mind) is really tough. We've been brainwashed during our entire lives. We are still being brainwashed. The definition of discipleship and the *kenosis* were forgotten shortly after the Reformation. We need to practice getting up on our feet a little bit, and trying to run a little bit longer, then maybe we'll get strong enough to spend some time on our feet. But this third temptation is affecting all of us. Falling to it is to sacrifice your holiness. Holiness means to dedicate your life totally to God's use. That means that when you wake up in the morning, your whole day is for God's purpose. When you leave your house, you are on a missionary journey. Every person that you meet is an assignment to you. You are missionaries. You don't have a career because you are slaves. Jesus is your career. When He says, "Jump," you jump. You don't even say how high, you just spring up. When He says, "Sit

down," you sit down. When He says, "Run," you run. When He says, "Talk to that person," you'd better talk to that person. He has already said be holy and provide for your family as His slave. His slave should not seek a throne like the devil offers; he should seek the cross that Jesus offers to His disciples.

Jason: God only has one plan; we should call that God's plan.

V: Amen! God's plan is the *kenosis* (see chart 6.2).

Turn to 2 Corinthians 4.

2 Corinthians

4:3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

4:5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

See we are not going to boast of our position and our status and our homes and our careers and our finances and our good citizenship and our good everything. That is not what we are about. But we are servants of others for Jesus' sake.

2 Corinthians

4:6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to [give] the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, . . .

Our treasure is not found in the world system. It is only found in our holiness:

2 Corinthians

4:7. . . that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

4:8 [We are] troubled on every side, yet not distressed; [we are] perplexed, but not in despair;

² Matthew 16:25.

4:9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

4:10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

God is saying that our bodies are for the purpose of living and preaching the Gospel message. You do not preach yourself. You preach Jesus crucified, and you go about bearing in your body the death of the Lord Jesus. That is when your message, when your words and your life draw together and are so identical that you will have ready listeners. But if you live the life of Riley, and you become just like the world system, being all goody-two-shoes, running around having your career and all the good stuff, don't preach the *kenosis* and don't preach discipleship because your life demonstrates the opposite of holiness and self denial.

Jerry: What do you do in your church on Sunday mornings? This will preach, I mean . . .

V: Yeah, I know it will. I preach sanctification to the church and justification to the lost.

Bob: What will be your topic Sunday morning?

V: I don't know, it will probably be some more of this kind of stuff. I only have one message: be holy.

Okay, let's get back to 2 Corinthians.

2 Corinthians

4:10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

4:11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, . . .

You see how this is a picture of the *kenosis*? Everything that we do, you see, is to be like this picture.

2 Corinthians

4:11 . . . that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

It takes supernatural power to just throw your life after the Lord. That is sacrifice.

2 Corinthians

4:12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

Life for the lost is modeled after the world system. It is the climb in pursuit of a throne via the upside down *kenosis*. Our lives, on the other hand, are lost to us because they are devoted to the Lord in holiness. That is why we die in order to live and for others to live. You are called to give your life as a sacrifice for the lost. If you don't do that, the lost don't have a chance. So you must die to yourself in order that the lost may live. If the lost live, you are going to ascend, after death, which is demonstrated in the *kenosis*. You are going to ascend and they are going to hug your neck for eternity.

2 Corinthians

4:13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;

4:14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present [us] with you.

4:15 For all things [are] for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

4:16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward [man] is renewed day by day.

4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding [and] eternal weight of glory; [for eternity.]

4:18 While we look not at the things which are seen, . . .

The things that are seen is the reverse *kenosis*, i.e. looking at the thing that you can see, living a good life, pursuing those visible things.

2 Corinthians

4:18. . . but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen [are] temporal; but the things which are not seen [are] eternal.

The things that are not seen are what we are called to pursue. However, when you have the mind of the devil, you can have a temporal throne, and you can do good, but not God's best, things to get there. Please see that this is the deception. It is the subtle fiery dart, and it catches every one of us, and we are so brainwashed that we cannot even detect the difference between good and best any more. Class, we must begin catching that fiery dart in the shield of faith or it will start a forest fire in our minds, and the next thing we know, we'll be at the end of our lives. You will have had a great life, and people will be speaking all manner of good things about you, but you will have lost your opportunity to be a holy person for the Lord every step of the way.

Holiness requires that you carry about in your own body the dyings, the persecutions, the despisings, all of the sufferings of Jesus Christ. Why? so that the lost may live. That is why Jesus came to die, so that the lost might live. Once we were lost, and now we live because somebody died for us. Now will you die for others by using your life for them instead of for yourself?

2. *The burden of Moab (pride in their growth and success)*

We pick up with the burden of Moab in verse 12.

Isaiah

16:12 And it shall come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place, that he shall come to his sanctuary to pray; but he shall not prevail.

Moab comes and prays to God because they are weary and about to collapse. They pray to God, but their prayers are not going to be successful. Why aren't their prayers going

to be successful? Look back at verse 6: the pride of Moab. He is proud in his haughtiness. They are even proud of their wrath. The Moabites are really moving up in the world, their pride is growing to the point of haughtiness because they are nearing the throne at the top (see the upside down *kenosis* in Chart 6.1). Now that they are facing severe troubles from every side, they pray for God to help them and keep them from falling off their pinnacle.

When you climb up here to the top of the reverse *kenosis*, when this is the model that you have adopted, and you pray, He says, "You got there by yourself, now get yourself out of trouble." That is a desperately, lonely place.

Preachers, watch out! When you experience a little success, your pride will quicken, and you will be tempted to step into the pulpit with haughtiness and wax eloquent. When you do, the persuasion to turn the people will be the words of men, not the Word of God. Beware! When you go into your study to pray, and you are a successful preacher who is receiving the applause of men, you will experience a lonely weakness that is horrifying. Just before you preach, you may get down on your knees and say, "Oh, God. The church is growing, but the people are not. Help the people. My sermons are not helping them. Discipleship is our biggest problem. My heart is broken for the people." He says, "You built this church; now you help the people. You are so successful, you've got the gift of gab, you can make all the people do what you want—jump out there and show me what you've got." My dear brethren, this is a desperately lonely situation of helplessness. I would rather die than face that again. That is a terrible predicament to be in. But it happens. Now if you are not concerned, and all you want to do is titillate the people, step right on up because there are a lot of good titillaters out there for you to imitate.

The burden of Moab is the prospect of failure in their climb to the top within the world system.

3. *The Burden of Damascus (leaning on the arms of flesh rather than on God)*

Please recall the Syro-Ephraimitic Crisis that we talked about early on. In that crisis, Syria and Israel teamed up against Judah. This threat to Judah was persecution. But Judah reacted the wrong way. God then used Assyria as a rod in His hands to whip up on Judah for appealing to the arms of flesh in an ungodly alliance. So now the burden has shifted for the rod.

Just because God uses something as a rod is not indicative of the goodness of the rod. That is not what is at stake here, and so when things come down on you, and it is hurting you, it is not to be automatically assumed that those persons hurting you are holier or more righteous. You can't draw conclusions about the rod. All you can do is draw conclusions about yourself. God uses the rod of discipline to redeem you from your unholy path. Now, when persecution comes on you, and you haven't done anything wrong, leap for joy for great is your reward in heaven. So when the rod comes whipping on you, it has nothing to do with the rod. You may have jumped over to climb in the reverse *kenosis*, and God is trying to wake you up and get you back on path. Or, perhaps, you are suffering persecution while on your *kenotic* path. In this latter case, you are to jump for joy in anticipation of greater reward.

Damascus' burden was enacted against Syria and Israel. Syria was conquered and turned into a vassal to Assyria. Israel's fate was much worse. They were annihilated. Now this burden is going to be used on Judah for their unholy alliance with Assyria.

Looking here in verse 10: because Judah .

..

Isaiah

17:10 . . . hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips:

17:11 In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: [but] the harvest [shall be] a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow.

Judah is going to go through some hard times. Please see that this burden is a direct result of following the wisdom of the world system. Therefore, this burden applies to Syria, Israel, Judah, you, me, your family, your church, your nation, and anyone, who is following the wisdom of the world system. I believe that it is speaking today to Israel and the Christian Church at a minimum.

Terry: It seems to me that something can be said there about the outward appearance versus the inward person or church. You know that they are going to plant pleasant plants, but the Law of the Harvest says they are going to reap a ton of evil because of the strange slips.

V: That is good Terry. It has the good outward appearance. It looks good; it can fool you, but the "strange slips" means that it is foreign to God. It is not holy. It has the appearance of good, but it is not holy.

Max: There is no way you can get away from the Law of the Harvest.

V: Right! God will not be mocked.

4. *The Burden of Egypt (lack of repentance leads to complete loss of freedom and dignity)*

Isaiah

20:2 . . . Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.

20:3 And the LORD said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and

barefoot three years [for] a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia;
20:4 So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with [their] buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.

Prior to the sermons on the burdens, Isaiah has mostly been warning His Own people. But the nine burdens are for both His Own people and others. And when the emphasis is to others, God tells Isaiah not only to preach the warning in words, but also to act it out by going naked for three years as a sign to wake up Egypt.

The burden is specifically speaking to Egypt and Ethiopia concerning what Assyria is going to do to them in the near term. But for Judah and us, it is a general warning not specifically dealing with Assyria because Assyria will not be the worst rod of discipline for Judah. Babylonia will be the empire that God uses as a worse rod of discipline for Judah. We don't know what the rod will be that God chooses to use on us.

Please note that God is reaching out to Egypt, one of His biggest enemies, and He is doing it through a prophet whom He is making to suffer extreme humiliation in ministry. Isaiah is demonstrating the *kenosis* for all ministers. We are not to be pursuing the good life through our ministries. We are to sacrifice our all in the pursuit of God's goals. Isaiah's exaltation in heaven is going to be very high. God said, "Do it," and bang, he did it.

5. *The Burden of the desert (ignoring the watchmen leads to defeat)*

The desert land is the approach from the south and southeast area of the Dead Sea—all that area there is desert land. God sets up a watchman to watch out for approaching dangers from that area. The parties are God, Isaiah, and the watchman.

Isaiah
21:6 For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth.

The watchman is not Isaiah; it is just an ordinary servant of God. The servant is a holy man, and the holy man is supposed to watch out for the enemy coming in from the desert land, from the land in which you would not expect an attack. And so the watchman is going to stay on a seemingly worthless watch if he is in fact holy.

Turn to Ezekiel 3:17-21.

Class, please understand that you are all watchmen. The reason that you are the watchman is because Jesus is the watchman, and you have the functions of Christ. Now, the Lord is in heaven; He has put into your hands His stewardship of this world. You are His appointed watchmen now.

Ezekiel
3:17 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.
3:18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked [man] shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.
3:19 Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.
3:20 Again, When a righteous [man] doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou has not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.
3:21 Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous [man], that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live,

because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.

As a watchman, you have to watch both for the wicked and also for the righteous. You watchmen are to warn both the wicked and the righteous. If you warn the wicked, and the wicked turns, you have delivered a soul. But if the wicked doesn't turn, you have no blood on your hands. But if you do not warn the wicked, and they end up having to go to hell, that execution is going to be done by you. You will push the doomed person into the lake of fire. The blood of the wicked is going to be required at your hands.

You are also a watchman for the righteous. If the righteous man turns off the path because the subtle mind of Satan gets hold of a righteous man, you have a responsibility to warn that righteous man to turn back because if he doesn't turn back, he will lose his rewards, and you will be the executioner. You will be the one that is called to take the rewards away from that person because you didn't warn him. But if you warn him, and he turns, he receives his rewards, but if he doesn't turn, he loses his rewards, but you are not the executioner.

Now these are hard words here, and every one of us is a watchman for both the wicked and the righteous. You are a holy man; your everything is dedicated to God. You have great responsibility.

Please note that Isaiah is not the object of this burden. Isaiah is the prophet whom God is using to announce the watchman assignment to holy people. Therefore, you pastors and teachers and leaders and elders in your churches who are preaching and teaching the Word of God are appointing watchmen. You'd better demonstrate a good model of watching like Isaiah did if you are going to be appointing because many executions are coming.

Don: The council is responsible to appoint deacons to watch over a church. If the one that is appointed does not do what he is supposed to do, is the blood on his hands or on the council's hands?

V: The blood is on both their hands because the council is the shepherd over the watchman. If the watchmen do not do their jobs, both the watchmen and their shepherds are guilty of not warning.

6. The Burden of Edom/Dumah (the enemy's attack will come at your point of weakness)

The next burden is Edom (it is also called Dumah). Edom is on the southeast corner of the Dead Sea area. It seems to me that there is a pattern taking place that indicates that the concentration of watchmen is to be stationed in the desert areas.

There is something to be learned here. The watchmen need to be in the places where an attack is least likely. I would presume that the warriors are, in turn, to be stationed at the points of ongoing attacks. When all of your defenses are being thrown against ongoing attacks, we must have watchmen stationed at the points that are not being actively defended.

Think about the devil's strategy. He is actively attacking every church, every family, and every Christian. But he is also looking for points of weakness to also attack. We are being defeated from the devil's attacks that hit us in areas that we assumed were safe. All of your defenses are going to be fighting the devil's frontal assault. But your backside is weak and vulnerable. So, you need a watchman back there where you really don't think there is going to be an attack coming. But you'd better have a watchman there just in case.

7. *The Burden of Arabia (people do not fight against the enemy's attack)*

Concerning this burden, there is just a fleeing from the enemies. There is no fight there at all. The parallel would be what the church does. Instead of standing up and fighting the world system, we surrender or flee from our enemies. We have the bunker mentality. We have abandoned our watchman duties, our spiritual warfare, our sanctification and have taken up instead the world system of building our physical empire, the institutional church. We no longer minister outside of the walls to the lost. We run away from the battle and hide inside the church walls. We do our fighting inside the walls and pursue the good life outside the walls by becoming compatible with political correctness.

Isaiah

21:15 For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war.

Prophetic warnings, witnessing, and anything that has to do with our ministries to the outside are grievous to us. So, we just declare that we are “not called to do them because they are not our spiritual gifts.”

8. *The Burden of the Valley of Vision (leaders run and hide from the attack).*

Here is a terrible situation where the rulers, the leaders, all flee. This would be like the pastors and teachers fleeing. Verse 4 is either Isaiah or the watchman. I can't make the distinction of which one this is, but it would be either Isaiah or the watchman.

Isaiah

22:4 . . . I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people.

22:5 For [it is] a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity. . .

I lean towards this being the watchman, and he is looking at the fleeing of the leaders

and the breaking through of the invasion. And in verse 9 he says:

Isaiah

22:9 Ye have seen also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many: . . .

Here is the situation. The watchman on the wall warns of the approaching enemy attack. However, the leaders all refuse to stand against the impending battle. The watchman then observes the breaking down of the walls, the breaches, and the devastating defeat of God's people. He has warned the people and the leaders that the wall is crumbling. The leaders refused to heed the warning, and the people look around and say, “Oh, no. We've got a good and beautiful wall. What is wrong with you?” The watchman replies: “Can't you see the breaches?” They say, “What breaches? It is a good wall.” Then the watchman begins to weep and grieve because when the invasion comes, enemies pour through the breaches that are there that the people can't see. When the leaders look up and see the invasion, they run and abandon the people to destruction.

Ben: Would that be a lack of spiritual discernment?

V: Yes, there is no spiritual discernment by the people, and there is cowardice by the pastors and teachers, and there is grief for the watchman. Leaders on the upside down *kenosis* cause breaches in the wall. Leaders on that path will not stand and fight for the people; bad shepherds don't sacrifice their lives for the people. Yes, leader, you get your life now on the upside down *kenosis*. But the watchman gives much of his life by keeping a vigil out for a dangerous invasion so that he can alert the people in time to save them. The watchman on the wall loses sleep, misses meals, forgoes great vacations and entertainment, and increased financial incomes. Why? because he is a holy man.

However, the fiery darts of doubts will come into his mind. He begins to question:

“Is my life being spent in a profitable way, and all he is doing is looking out for the safety of the people out there who are living their lives. The watchman on the wall begins to think, “Why can’t I have a life like that? Why can’t I live and be normal like everybody else? Why can’t my children have things? Why can’t I have a nice house?” But the man on the wall is dedicated. He is a holy man whose life is given for the protection of the people who have easy lives. He must sacrifice by being the man on the wall who must holler out to the people and say, “Be ye holy, even as God is holy.”

The watchmen on the walls of today’s churches must alert the people that there is an invasion already under way and that there are many breaches in the wall because the people’s minds and their leader’s minds are set on the world system, i.e. the upside down *kenosis*. The watchmen are hollering out that there are breaches in the wall. Those breaches are lost definitions of discipleship and holiness. Also a whole doctrine has been lost since the Reformation. That doctrine is the *kenosis*, and it has been lost even though it is still residing clear as a bell in God’s Word. The people can’t see the breaches in the wall. Only the watchmen and the good leaders can see the breaches in the wall. The people are enjoying life while life is crumbling around them, the pastors and teachers have run from the fight and are hiding, and the watchmen are grieving. The Christians have their careers and their easy lives because any sacrifices that are required by the world system are for the elevation of the self. They do not even know that the battle has already begun, and they are losing. The world system says that they should climb towards wealth and status.

Therefore, instead of sacrificing for others, climbing up by stepping on others is the approved way for attaining wealth and status.

And then we come to the destruction that is on the other side of death. Every one of us is going to reach the other side. Do you want to reach the other side of the upside down *kenosis* or do you want to reach the other side of the *kenosis*? The watchman on the wall is hollering this choice out. The enemy is subtle; you cannot even expect him to come this way, i.e. via good citizenship or via good churchmanship. But he is coming in! It is a sneak attack, and the people will be devoured, and the pastors have gone into hiding. The watchmen will be killed.

The next thing you know is that your life is over with. You have only one life to live. One! Don’t let Satan steal it from you by tempting you to live all of your life for the now only to lose it later. Don’t let Satan take that. Fight him! You leaders, DON’T RUN! You stand in there and fight. Be an example for your people. You watchmen, give your lives in watching for the people. Exercise your prophetic function and holler out to warn the people. Show them the breaches in the wall. Yes, the people under the wrong definition of holiness are going to withstand your claims. They are going to support the world system, but you’ve got to stand in there because you are the watchmen. If you don’t warn them, their blood will be required at your hands.

9. The Burden of Tyre

This burden is of harlotry. I think I will hold right here and start next chapter with the lesson on Tyre because we’ve got to stomp around a little bit on this one.

Chapter Questions

1. Describe the apostasy, which the leaders brought to the land (Isaiah 9).
2. What are the nine burdens.

Chapter 7

HARLOTRY AND DRUNKENNESS

Chapter 23 describes the Burden of Tyre. We completed eight of nine burdens last week, and now we are going to finish the ninth, i.e. the Burden of Tyre.

The Burden of Tyre builds upon what happened in Isaiah 22:13: “Let us eat, drink, for tomorrow we shall die.” God’s reaction to such flippant behavior by His steward, who was Shebna at that time, is that He is going to replace Shebna with a new steward over His house and treasure. God puts in Eliakim as His new steward (Isaiah 22:20). Eliakim is described as a steward that is very much like what would be describing Jesus Christ. This description is basically a prophecy of Jesus.

Isaiah

22:21 . . . I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.

22:22 And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

Certainly, God’s promise of a new steward is a prophecy of Jesus, but the intermediate fulfilling of this prophecy is Eliakim as the new steward during Isaiah’s day and time. But Eliakim is going to commit the same error as did Shebna, and that error is to focus on the world system, i.e. focus on pleasing your fleshly desires. When you do that, it leads to harlotry, and that is what the Burden of Tyre is—a burden of harlotry.

Isaiah 23:1, which is repeated in the book of Revelation, says: “The Burden of Tyre, Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste.” Verse 3 says that the harvest of the

river is her revenue. This is indicating that they are mercenary in their religion.¹

Mercenary means that you are ministering for monetary gain. The purpose of ministry is God’s purpose, the *Missio Dei*, and He has assigned parts in it for each and every saint to fill and perform. Sometimes we are allowed to earn part or even all of our sustenance by working in that assigned ministry. But we are never to do the ministry for the purpose of earning money. Doing ministry for monetary gain is mercenary and makes us harlots.

Verses 15-18 declare that Tyre is a harlot fornicating for money:

Isaiah

23:15 And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot.

23:16 Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot . . .

23:17 And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.

23:18 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.

I want to draw your attention here to this irony: the blessing of material goods and wealth and fornication by the kings is considered holiness by these Judeans. Guess who else thinks that? There is an understanding

¹ In the course on the book of Revelation, fresh water signifies God’s religion.

that is prevalent across our land that being blessed in the world's system with wealth and status is indicative of holiness. That is a wrong conclusion. Here is what happens with harlotry. Harlotry is to throw your heart after the wrong lover. Tyre put their heart after material things. Even their ministry became mercenary, and that is a committing of harlotry. A Christian harlot, along with the Jews, interprets the finery, and their goods and their great revenue as indicative of holiness.

Going back to last week, you remember how the watchman was on the wall, and he was pointing out all the breaches in the wall, and those breaches were of the opposite of the *kenosis*. The people were not trying to deny themselves and practice true holiness. Instead they were indulging themselves and pursuing the world's system.

Terry: Tyre was a pretty magnificent city at that time. Is this a warning to Judah not to put her trust in this city?

V: No, it is not just the city being trusted, but the city's worldly philosophy. This is a very strong warning not to get involved in this same kind of mindset which is a mercenary religion, a harlot's, mindset. In today's language, this would be a minister for filthy lucre or a volunteer minister seeking the applause of men.

Go back to Shebna and Eliakim. Their problem was trying to achieve wealth, power, status, and happiness from their ministry. When you move that philosophy from the secular culture into the church, then you get a mercenary ministry. That is a ministry for temporal profit, for material gain. When you get mercenary ministry from a philosophy that is focused on the now of life, i.e. get all you can get now in this life, then you will have the idea that gain is indicative of holiness.

Now, when we see the word harlot in Isaiah, it makes me run right to Jeremiah

because Jeremiah doesn't pull any punches with Judah, and he doesn't do it in poetic style like this. He just declares straight out that Judah's ministers are harlots.

The book of Revelation speaks of the harlot sitting on the beast dressed in finery and drinking from a gold goblet. This harlot pictures a mercenary church selling her heart's devotion to Satan because the harlot was riding on the beast. When you get on the beast, you are blessed with material goods, but you sell your destination and devotion because there is no bridle and reins on the beast. The beast goes where the beast wants to go, and if you will get on the beast, the beast will carry you and bless you with all of the "worldly indications" of holiness. All you have to do is give up the reins to your life to the beast and devote your time to riding it.

However, we must do the opposite of riding the beast for personal gain. We are told to deny ourselves (that means to not do what you want to do), pick up your cross (accept the *kenosis* as your model of life), and throw your life in with Jesus by following Him (obey Jesus by giving Him the reins to your life).

When we devote our lives to Jesus, then the indications of holiness will be sufferings and persecutions (Paul listed his sufferings as proof of his apostleship [2 Cor. 11:23ff]). Persecutions and sufferings are the same things that happened to Christ, the Apostles, and all of our great forefathers. Jesus said that the world hates Him and for us not to be surprised when it hates us for His Name sake.²

Here are some scriptures to write down about the harlot: Revelation 18:17-19, Jeremiah chapters 2 & 3. About fornication: Revelation 18:3. About gain as indicative of holiness, Philippians 3:7-8 which is a restatement of the *kenosis*:

² Luke 6:22.

Philippians

3:7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

3:8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things [but] loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them [but] dung, that I may win Christ,

3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

GOD CURSES THE LAND OF JUDAH (ISAIAH 24)

Isaiah

24:1 Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.

The Lord has pronounced a curse upon the earth. The reason for the curse is:

Isaiah

24:5 The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.

This defilement is a reversal, you see, of 2 Chronicles 7:14 which declares that “If my people who are called by My Name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and forgive their sins and heal their land.” Isaiah 24:5 says that they did not do that. The people of God in Judah are neither repentant nor humble. Therefore, I am going to curse their land.

Judah’s behavior was just the opposite of 2 Chronicles 7:14. Judah broke the laws, the ordinance, and the covenant. So their land and the earth itself is cursed because of what God’s people have done.

Now move over to verse 16.

Isaiah

24:16 From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, [even] glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.

This cry is from the righteous inhabitants of Judah. The cry of the righteous is, “Woe, woe, woe, we are suffering; we are being righteous but we are suffering.” Sound familiar? This is what your cry should be. Now what are the righteous, who are suffering in their righteousness, to do? What these righteous are doing. They are singing and praising God. You see how it says that they have heard songs in verse 16. This refers to the singing in verse 14.

Isaiah

24:14 They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the LORD, they shall cry aloud from the sea.

The righteous saints are supposed to sing and praise God in the midst of their suffering. Why would we be surprised at suffering for righteousness sake? Jesus has already told us that we will do so. And so here is an indication of Old Testament suffering by God’s people in their righteousness. They are singing songs, but they also realize that they have been dealt treacherously.

How did they get dealt treacherously? Their leaders are telling them, “Eat and drink for tomorrow we die.” If the leaders are pandering to the people by focusing on fleshly self indulgence in present time, then the people are getting set up for the hit. When you get your hit, you will then realize that you have been dealt treacherously. All the promises of blessing were lies by the leaders in order to get what they themselves wanted.

We need to honor our teachers, pastors, and church leaders when they tell us the truth because it is so easy to tell the congregation

what they want to hear. But that man of God who stands up there and tells the truth and lays God's requirements out there will take their hits. Those are wonderful people who are shielding us from the treachery. Honor them and imitate them.

Chapters 25 and 26 review the kingdom age. It is basically a look at the millennial reign by Christ and His saints. Isaiah 25:8, which is restated again in 1 Corinthians 15, says:

Isaiah

25:8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken [it].

This is a direct prophecy. 1 Corinthians 15:55-56 quotes this verse about swallowing up death in victory. Revelation 21:4 also quotes this verse about the wiping away the tears off of all the faces. These prophecies are restated in the New Testament as promises of our final victory in our resurrection.

Isaiah 26:2 is going to give you a puzzle.

Isaiah

26:2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

Now, go to Revelation 21:24-27 which describes the new heaven and the new earth after the judgment.

Revelation

21:24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

21:25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

21:26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

21:27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither [whatsoever] worketh abomination, or

[maketh] a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

In this city being spoken of, will be saints living with God. The city's gates will be open, and the nations are going to come into the city, and they are going to bring their glory into it. The puzzle that I want to leave with you is: who are the nations? What are they doing outside the city. Now if the saved people are in the city, who are the people outside of the city? Or is there a hierarchy within the saved, i.e. an inner circle and an outer? Is the saved inner circle within the city and the saved outer circle outside of the city?

Now, I cannot spend the time to jump out of context and discuss what we studied in the Revelation class. I just want to create a thirst in you for exploring what heaven is going to be like. God tells a lot about heaven. There is plenty to learn here. We discovered that the kingdom of God is going to be ever growing. How is that? Are people being added to the kingdom of God in heaven? Is heaven going to grow and grow and grow forever? numerically, qualitatively, both? The Bible says that it is going to grow forever. To where is it going to grow?

Terry: There's got to be a reason for not shutting the gates.

Larry: Scripture declares that nothing unholy can enter.

V: These questions point to intriguing and fascinating study about heaven, and I wanted to pique your curiosity and get you to studying about heaven.

I want every one to get a mansion and crowns in heaven, but there are going to be some who are going to be naked in heaven and without a place to live. Beware! Don't assume that God is a respecter of persons because He is not. Just because you are His child doesn't mean He is swooning over what you are doing. He looks for His people to lead the way in righteous action. And He is

sick to death of our offerings as substitutes for our living the *kenosis* in sacrificial ministry during our sanctification process.

Isaiah 27 describes Satan's defeat and Israel's rule in the kingdom. Satan is depicted by the word Leviathan, the piercing serpent, that crooked serpent, and the dragon that is in the sea. And then the trumpet will blow in verse 13. Again, this statement is repeated in the New Testament. This will be the last trump of God in that day when the saints are gathered. It is described as the seventh and last trumpet in the Book of Revelation.

WOE TO THE DRUNKARDS OF EPHRAIM

Isaiah

28:1 Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, . . .

Ephraim is the word for Israel, the northern kingdom. So this is "woe to Israel." And the woe is describing Israel as drunkards. In verse 1 it says that they are overcome with wine. In verse 3, it says that the crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet. God is indicting Ephraim, for being drunk and losing their alertness and focus required for holiness.

What I want to share with you here is that when we are dealing with drunkenness among God's people, it is not confined to wine or alcohol. It is an attitude and a life purpose. The drunkenness can be a carefree attitude in which pleasure and success can produce a high in which you lose your alertness and focus required for holiness. When you are drunk with wine, it takes your mind off of reality, and makes you carefree and careless in your approach to life. The same thing happens with a focus on pleasure and success.

Terry: Eat, drink, and be merry?

V: Yes . . . while you are pursuing fame, wealth, and power. That kind of drunkenness can be brought into the people of God apart

from alcohol. It is a carelessness and a carefree approach to life that is based on who you are and what you are pursuing—i.e. the upside down *kenosis* of pleasure, success, and climbing.

Now hear me on this because it is a serious problem that is prevalent today. If the Christians are content with going to heaven and assuming that they are going to have a great mansion and crowns because they are children of God, then that is drunkenness, a drunken attitude. This drunkenness will cause you to be carefree and careless, and stumble through life on the easy path that provides pleasure and success. This path leads to destruction. When you get to heaven and stand before the Lord in your works judgment, you are going to wonder how you ended up in such destruction when you intended to hear God say: "Well done, my good and faithful servant." The answer is that because of the drunken attitude of your life, you were not alert and focused on maximizing your usefulness to the Lord.

Israel was worse than Judah was because their drunkenness included more than just their attitude. It included alcoholic drunkenness. Ephraim is the word used for Israel in order to separate out the northern kingdom. If God used the word Israel instead of Ephraim, we might have thought that He meant the whole United Kingdom. But He is specifying the northern kingdom that is drunk with alcohol. That alcoholic drunkenness lowered their defenses to the point that they were also drunk on idolatry and false religion.

Israel was worse than Judah because Baalism had entered into Israel, but not Judah. Their Baalism and their Judaism provided contentment in their worship and sacrifices to their gods. They thought that God was pleased because they were making their religious sacrifices to Him. They are serving Baal also with sacrifices. So they have all their bases covered, and they think that they

can't be missing it like that bunch down there in Judah who were serving only one out of the two.

Israel's drunkenness is twofold: alcohol and false religion. And so God is going to hit these guys hard, so hard that they are going to cease to exist as God's nation.

In verse 3 God mentions that Israel is to be trodden under feet. Refer to Matthew 5:13 which says that if the salt has lost its savor, it is good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot. God is saying that Israel is salt that has lost its savor. Yes, they are worshipping in their place of worship. If their worship and sacrifices and attendance count for anything, there should be no condemnation for Israel.

Do you hear how that condemnation applies to us? If church attendance and tithing count for something, there should be no condemnation for us, but it is what you do and don't do outside of your worship in the church that causes our guilt. If we go to church to worship God and hear His Word, then we must obey His Word. We cannot substitute worship and sacrifice for obedience. If we know the Truth and don't do the Truth, then it is sin to us.

Because substituting worship and sacrifices for obedience is what Israel is doing, then they are salt without savor. They are just good enough to be thrown under the feet of men and be trodden under.

Isaiah

28:7 But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble [in] judgment.

Even the priests and prophets of Israel are drunk. Their drunkenness causes them not to see clearly and causes a lack in good judgment. I believe this to mean that all of these

leaders are absolutely certain that they are on the right path because of their worship and sacrifices.

Drunkenness also comes from the highs of success and pleasure of the good life, or pursuit thereof. These highs produce the same unclear vision and stumbling in judgment as the alcoholic highs. The paths of both kinds of highs go to the same destination—destruction.

Sometimes the Scriptures will talk of drunkenness and mean that it comes from alcohol, and other times it means that it comes from successes and pleasures of the good life. I would guess that a majority of the time it will be the latter, and this enjoyment or pursuit of the good life will set us faithful worshipers up for failure. We fail in these cases by missing the lesson for us. We exempt ourselves from drunkenness because we are not drinking the alcohol.

So when we see the word drunkenness, we must not automatically assume that it means that everybody is drunk from alcohol and the whole country is staggering around. It means that the people are out of the path of God. They have replaced obedience with worship and sacrifice. And they are busy, busy, busy with their pursuits of pleasure and success. They have become blind to their wretchedness and are stumbling off path.

We must understand that if we are not willing to walk the walk, then our worship and sacrifices are worthless. The walk on His path for us is what He wants of us, i.e. denying ourselves, taking up our crosses, and following Him.

God wants the people that are not His to be reborn into His people. But once you are reborn into His family, the issue of rebirth for you becomes a past event. The new question is, "How are you walking as a child of God?" That question is very important, and I want everybody in this room to be aware of it.

When you leave this room, the blood is not going to be on my hands because you yourselves must answer the new question about how you walk. Will you be alert and focused on walking God's sanctification path for you? Or will you get high on your pursuit of pleasures and successes? It is imperative that you get this issue right. If you leave this room and focus on yourself, your status as a child of God, and think that you are going to get a mansion and crowns because you are the precious child of God who is basking in pleasure and success, then you have bought the lie, and you are drunk.

The prophets and the priests are also drunken fools.

Isaiah

28:8 For all tables are full of vomit [and] filthiness, [so that there is] no place [clean].

28:9 Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? [them that are] weaned from the milk, [and] drawn from the breasts.

28:10 For precept [must be] upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, [and] there a little:

28:11 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

28:12 To whom he said, This [is] the rest [wherewith] ye may cause the weary to rest; and this [is] the refreshing: yet they would not hear.

Why can't they hear? because they are drunk. They are content; they are free of cares. Class, you cannot hear the call to repentance if you think you are on the right path. If you base the rightness of your walk on the fact that you are a Christian, then you are susceptible to sin without realizing your need for repentance. Rightness is based only on God's Word.

If your walk does not line up with the Word of God, then you have need of repentance. Behavior acceptable to the

church, society, and your own self is not your goal. Success, wealth, and societal acceptance are not the measures to be used. When we accept our good church attendance, tithing, and good moral citizenship as proof of our rightness with God, we are drunk and free of cares. Drunkenness has invaded the church just like it did Israel and Judah.

Isaiah

28:13 But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, [and] there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

You teach and preach to your drunks precept upon precept, line upon line, and yet they fall backwards and are snared and broken. It is a heartrending thing to the pastor who has clear vision.

For example, take the pastor who is trying to teach a church and bring that church up to real discipleship, but the church says, "We are in good shape, we're growing, we've got the building program, we've got money in the bank and everything is rolling along just fine." They have fallen into a snare! Everybody in the church needs to be a self-denying, cross-bearing, follower of Jesus. Holiness is achieved only by becoming a clean vessel set aside by God for only His Own special use. We each need to be winning souls or on the way to being a soul winner, witnessing everywhere, learning how to use tracts, learning how to touch people's lives helping them, counseling, and living as an example that is worthy of imitation.

Isaiah

28:14 Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which [is] in Jerusalem.

28:15 Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made

lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:

Wow, God has included Judah's Jerusalem under His indictment. Whenever we hide under the lies, avoid our walks, take comfort and refuge in ear-tickling lies, and the preacher that tells you what you want to hear, we think that we are doing so good that God is swooning over us. We are comfortable and in no need of repentance. Instead, we are going to come to a terrible end because the lies are not refuge. The only refuge is what God says next about the Stone:

Isaiah
28:16 . . . I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner [stone], a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

And so the Stone is our refuge. Too many are taking refuge in lies.

Brandon: I was thinking about the opposite of being drunk. Scripture tells us not to conform any longer to the pattern of this world, not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought, but rather think of ourselves with sober judgment.²

V: Yes. It is imperative that we be sober and vigilant. It is too easy to be deceived into a false security, and when I say false security, I am not talking about losing your salvation; I

hope everybody in here is past that part. This entire lesson is about sanctification. We find false security in church attendance. Jeremiah addressed that repeatedly in Judah's false security in the "Temple of the Lord." He described the Judeans as harlots because they saw no need for repentance. And today, what do I hear? "I go to church and have no need of repentance." Where is the walk? Where do we talk about our ministries during our sanctification part of salvation? When do the people that go to church get called to account for their walk? We've got too many who go to church; they proclaim their faith in Jesus, and then live like hell. And it is leading multitudes into the pit.

God has a path for each of us to walk. Christianity is more than church attendance and tithing. It requires that your walk and confession match up. Plus your self-denying, cross-bearing, following of Jesus Christ in His call to you into His assigned ministry must be included in your walk. Our failures in our sanctification are destroying this world. The people are looking at us. We need to show by our examples that we actually believe our own words of confession.

² NIV Romans 12:3.

Chapter Questions

What are the two forms of drunkenness?

CHAPTER 8

WOE TO GOD'S PEOPLE

WOE TO JERUSALEM

(Isaiah 29)

Last week we studied the woe to Ephraim/Israel, and it was to the drunkards of Ephraim. Concerning that woe, we talked about the two types of drunkenness. This week we are going to talk about Jerusalem and the most prevalent type of drunkenness.

Isaiah

29:9 Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink.

29:10 For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.

I want to re-emphasize to you that the drunkenness being spoken of here is not mostly drunkenness from drinking alcohol like that of the northern kingdom. I want you to be aware that drunkenness can take various forms. Of course one form of drunkenness is alcoholic drunkenness. The effects of that drunkenness are that you lose your awareness and you lose the ability to reason properly. There are a lot of things that go wrong in you from that kind of drunkenness.

Well, there is a spiritual drunkenness, too. And the same kinds of things that you do in your body from drinking alcohol you will do in your spirit by being filled with a drunken spirit. That drunken spirit comes from being contented, unaware, deceived into thinking that you are walking the path of righteousness and holiness when you are not.

So, the people of the northern kingdom are enjoying drunken contentment from alcoholism and Baalism. The southern kingdom, however, is enjoying drunken contentment from the compartmentalization of their behavior and their Judaism.

The people of Jerusalem are practicing their religion, they are doing it diligently, they are meeting in the Temple, they are making their sacrifices, the priests and prophets are ministering in the Temple, the scribes are bringing the Law to them and explaining it to them, and all are content with their religious lives.

What is wrong with all of that? Move to today—the church. Is drunkenness in the church? What about us? If we begin to be content with our religion and lose perception of the holiness required by God in order to participate in yoke with Him in His *Missio Dei*, then we, too, are drunken.

So, as a result of Jerusalem's drunkenness, a deep sleep is being poured out upon the people. Notice that the prophets, rulers, and seers all are in a deep sleep that has been poured out upon them.

When you look with spiritual eyes, you can see the staggering church. You can see the irrationality in Christians today. You can see them leading others astray while being very convinced that they are walking their assigned paths of righteousness. And I think that we need to be alerted to come out of our stupors and to avoid falling back into this kind of drunkenness.

I suspect that most Christians are already in drunken stupors. All of us have periods of soberness, but we seek to resume our drunken state in order to avoid the pain and sacrifice of the *kenosis* in order to pursue the good life of the upside down *kenosis*.

The drunken Christian cannot even see the *kenosis*, much less see their obligation to adopt it. They read the commandment many times throughout their lives without ever understanding the straightforward Words of God. Isaiah says that they cannot understand it because of their drunkenness.

Isaiah

29:11 And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which [men] deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it [is] sealed:

29:12 And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.

Now here we have a general, widespread lack of ability to discern what God's Word is saying. The people turn first to the learned people to tell them what the Bible says, but the meanings are blocked out of their understanding because of their carnal drunkenness.

Great learnedness does not produce great spiritual insight. Only sober and alert spiritual obedience produces it.¹ Now the combination of great learnedness and being filled with the Spirit works great. But a *carnal* man with a doctorate in theology who is drunk and in a deep sleep is blocked from discerning God's meaning.

So, since the pastors can't discern God's Word, the people turn to the unlearned as their teachers. The Sunday school teachers say that they are unqualified to teach because they are unlearned. All are depending upon human education and worldly wisdom, but God blocks their understanding because they refuse to obey Him. They are content in their religion and are not aware of any need of change in their lives. Thus we are at an impasse. God gives understanding of spiritual things only to His disciples. On the other hand, we refuse to deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow Jesus in order to be His disciples. So, instead of sobering ourselves from our drunkenness, God pours a deep sleep over us.

A pervasive blindness sweeps over the land. In the book of Revelation, it is described as a black cloth that is covering the light. When the light turns into blackness, there is a pervasive lack of ability to see the truth, the obvious truths.

¹ John 7:17.

Isaiah

29:13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near [me] with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

I want to pause here for a minute and ask you to ponder this verse. We've heard about drawing near Him with our words out of our mouths, and we've heard about our hearts being far from Him, but please see the cause of this dilemma. The fear of God is being taught by the precepts of men. What does that mean to you?

Mr. Gulley: Pastors are teaching God's Word according to their own perceptions.

Larry: I see it as traditions from our history of declaring and doing it our way.

Helen: Some of the learned people deny the actual wording of the Bible. They declare that the obvious meaning can't possibly be correct. This has blinded us to what the Bible is really trying to teach us.

V: So far, you are all right, and the Book becomes sealed.

Jake: I think part of it is that we want to make the Bible fit our lives instead of fitting our lives to the Bible.

V: That is a good point, Jake, and I see that frequently.

Alberta: The heart removed from God is not a heart sold out to obey Him. What results is just ritual.

V: Superficial ritualism is a good point too.

Freddy: We must teach the way the Lord taught, i.e. sold out to what we are teaching. When we exempt ourselves from any part, then the meaning is blocked.

V: Class, this is important what Freddy just said. Christians take all the good parts of justification and glorification but reject the costly parts of sanctification. We just study

all that sweet part, the victory right now, the no-sufferings of the great life that we are enjoying right now. We are willing to obey God by claiming His "good" promises. But what about all that other part? Suffering and pressing on even when all resistance comes against you. What about the perseverance, and the patience, enduring under the burden of ministry? What about when the whole world is trying to kill you and stop your witness? If the world persecuted the Lord, certainly we shouldn't be surprised when it persecutes us. What about all the hard parts of the *kenosis* in sanctification? And so our hermeneutic adjusts around to accept just the good easy parts of justification and glorification.

Mr. Gulley: This puts me in mind of the river of sanctification. Some . . . most of us dig a little trench beside it and call that the river. We do this in order to support our desired comfortable lifestyles.

Max: True fear of God moves your heart closer to Him, not away from Him. When we fear God, then we will deny ourselves from self-indulgence because that fear extends to fearing God's reactions to our going our own ways. We have replaced our fear of God with God's love of us.

V: That is good, Max.

The scripture says that the fear of God is taught by the precepts of man. What kind of fear is that?

Larry: Well, I think it is the good part, wanting to do the good part and hear the good part, live the good part, and leave out the suffering. So the tradition is to only teach and live in the soft part, and just not get into the hard part. We're saved, and everything is fine and you just come to church on Sunday, get your nose counted, nickel counted, and other than that, just sit down and be quiet. Don't be doing any of that crazy stuff outside because it causes waves that bring on suffering. The world is not going to turn on us if we live the easy part only. But the hard part results in suffering.

V: Christians seem to be content with just existing in their salvation.

Helen: We lean towards the God loves us part and stay away from the wrathful God Who chastises His children.

Trouble: I think the fear of God has been replaced with the fear of just getting caught. When that happens, then there is not true repentance. There is self-pity but not a godly sorrow that worketh repentance. Repentant sorrow of today has become figuring out how to get out of the caughtness with minimal damage. True repentance from our fear of God would cause us to press on for holiness.

Freddy: My fear used to be defined by super grace that had no demands on me. Now, my fear demands growth in godliness.

Larry: We studied Jonah last night in our Wednesday night Bible study, and it connects with what we are talking about. When Jonah told them to pitch him into the sea, he was willing to die but not to repent.

Max: If I don't accept the *kenosis*, then I don't have to worry about the penalties.

Terry: The meaning of that one little word fear has been changed to mean respect. By changing the meaning of that word, then God's commands lose their impact.

V: Yes. What happens with ministers is that we preach and teach God's Word like we are supposed to do. But when it comes to application in ministries, we meddle in the Lord's business. Jesus is Lord of the student. And it is not the precept of the teacher that is going to dictate to the student what he is going to do. Your job, as a teacher, preacher, minister, is to get the hand of the student and the hand of the Lord together, and then get out of the way. Now when you do that,

then the student comes under the fear of the Lord, and the Lord knows how to apply the rod of discipline to lead us into obedience.

But here is what is happening. We are getting between the Lord and the candidate or the saint, and we are telling him what to do, we're going to design and dictate the plan, and the fear of the Lord is being transferred from the precepts of God to the precepts of the ministers. And so what we have to do now is to get the fear of disappointment transferred back from the teacher/preacher to the Lord.

When you are raising your child up, you begin the training of that child by having him fear you. The child will learn obedience if he fears you. When that child is trained up to fear you, he is conditioned to obey the one he fears. Then when the parenting transitions to God, the child will transfer his fear and obedience to God because God will be the one who pulls off his belt instead of us. Discipleship works when it is the disciple following the Lord. But it doesn't work when the Christian is following the precepts of men even when they are "good" precepts.

Now, every sermon should have an application, but it should be the kind of application where the Spirit calls out the saints and says, "I want you to do this. . . ." But it shouldn't be that the preacher is calling out the saint to say, "I want you to do this. . . ." Can you see the difference?

Mr. Gulley: The devil tricked Adam and Eve into being aware of them selves. We let our selves become a barrier to God. The motivation is there whether it be for personal recognition, financial gain or whatever. We preach God's Word based on what He can do to benefit us, not what benefits the people.

Max: What would be more dangerous than that would be doing it for noble motives, believing that it ought to be done that way, instead of for selfish reasons.

V: And this is where we are, and that is where these people in Jerusalem are. They are doing the best they know how. But they are following the precepts of men, nonetheless. They are not following God.

If the people buy into the precepts of men, then while you are in the pulpit preaching your heart out, they will look and listen and feel completely saintly. But as soon as the last amen is said and they file out, the saintliness gets left in the church.

We are teaching the "fear" of God through the precepts of men. The only ones who are fearing God are those who could do the fun and desired thing that they really want to do, good or bad, but don't do it because they must complete a dreaded and very distasteful task that they know the Lord wants done. Now if they don't fear God but fear men, they'll behave seemly when man is watching but otherwise, no deal.

So, that is what we have here in Jerusalem—a city full of people that are content with their religion. They go to the Temple, they get the nod of approval from the priests and the prophets, and they leave there and then live like they want to. Now I can't see much difference between that and what we've got today. The fear has transferred from God to the precepts of men.

Fearing man's precepts does not work for Christian discipleship. We've tried to make it work, some of us are still trying to make it work with all manner of fancy and expensive programs, but it just isn't going to work.

WOE TO GOD'S CHILDREN (Isaiah 30)

Isaiah

30:9 That this [is] a rebellious people,
lying children, children [that] will not
hear the law of the LORD:

30:10 Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits:

When I read this, it sounded strange, but I'm convinced that that is where many people are today; they would rather hear a lie than the Truth. They will run to it if the lie is pleasing to their ears.

I've experienced people running from me when I am teaching or preaching. They want to get out of town or get me out of town, one or the other (laughter throughout the room).

God's rebellious children prefer the lie to the Truth. Jerusalem is exemplary of the entire nation. All of the people are content; they are described as drunk, and the prophets and seers are blind. The people are rebellious and saying to the prophets:² "Preach to us smooth and deceitful things."

Christians are flocking to the church that will tell them all manner of good things. They listen to a false prophet on TV: "Yeah, we're going to donate to him. He's a good preacher. He understands my situation and makes me feel good with his wisdom. He explains that my behavior is not sin; it is normal. God understands me because He made me this way."

² The school of the prophets were those that are on the payroll. The good prophets weren't on the payroll—Isaiah was one of them, Jeremiah was one of them, Amos was one of them. They were ministers who provided for their own livelihoods and also shared with the people what God had told them. The king is not paying these folks to prophesy. The official prophets are getting all the congregations to answer to them because the king is paying them to tell them all manner of good things and how well they and the kingdom are doing. The king has everything running right, and all are prospering. And so the people are being told how good they are by the official but false prophets. The unpaid prophets, those who are being called out by God, are relaying God's warnings to them of how bad they are. Thus, the people prefer the false prophets to God's true prophets.

Verse 20 says that adversity will cause these rebellious children to see the truth. That is why we have tribulation. Class, God is going to bring tribulation on this planet, to the church, and it is because it helps the saints who are blind, drunk, and asleep, to wake up and see the Truth.

I remember how my daddy would tell me not to do something, but I went ahead and did it because I thought my daddy didn't understand what he was talking about. Well, he explained it to me after I did it (raucous laughter). It was that travail, adversity, and pain that helped me understand his precepts.³

God is doing this to the Church—adversity is going to intensify. This whole book of Isaiah is about not only Israel and Judah, but it is about you. This woe is for us now. We are going to see judgment and tribulation intensifying. Adversity and tribulation is a gift from God. Please hear this. Tribulation for the saints is not destructively punitive. It is meant for redemption purposes. God is not simply punishing the saints by tribulation ("Thy Rod . . ." of Ps. 23). He is also redeeming them by using the tribulation to turn (" . . . and Thy Staff" of Ps. 23) the saints in the right direction because he loves them. When He brings tribulation, it is not to mash you down and grind you into the dirt. It is to lift you up and help you to become the saint that He wants you to be.

When tribulation comes is when you can shine. When good times are here, anybody can grin and say, "Boy howdy,

³ I found out that when my daddy got mad, the best thing for me to do was run to him. When I ran from him, it hurt a lot worse because the belt had a longer arc to build up speed. He would get me by the arm, then I would run in circles. He would go ka-wow, and I would jump, and he'd go ka-wow and I'd jump. I found out through trial and error, that I could run and grab him around the leg, and it wouldn't hurt as much then.

isn't this good," but when the hard times hit is when you can shine when most people can't. You set yourself apart in the bad times under the hard trials. That is when your witness gains credibility because you are pressing onward, not giving up. Not stopping and running for cover with the masses, but pressing on and becoming the example that God wants you to be. And then your sermons will be meaningful because you are living them instead of being hypocritical.

Chapter 31 repeats God's command not to trust in alliances. Verse 1 expands this commandment to "not trust in chariots and in horsemen" because of their human strength.

I had to counsel one of my relatives last night because of his fear of the economic situation. We're fixing to have some hard times, and you need to be prepared for them. When I say prepared, I'm saying, "Do the prudent thing." Set your lives in order; line up with the Word of God, fear Him, don't fear death or those who can kill the body. Fear the One Who can kill the body and cast your soul into hell.

God expects everybody to do what is prudent and reasonable. Prepare for the obvious, but don't walk in a state of fear in which you are trembling, and you fear not being able to make it. That is an embarrassment to God. You need to stand up there in the middle of all hell coming down on our heads and say, "I belong to Jesus." You take your hits if they come to you because that may be your last opportunity to shine.

God is sending adversity after His rebellious children as redemptive discipline. He warns His people not to trust in chariots or the strong arms of flesh as adequate defenses against His discipline.

I want you to be convinced to trust God as you "walk through the valley of the shadow of death" (Ps. 23) just like Hezekiah did. It was terrifying for Hezekiah and all of Judah

when the Assyrians launched their campaign against Judah.

Assyria had destroyed the cities one after another and finally had laid a great siege against Jerusalem. As far as Hezekiah could see were Assyrian warriors all around the entire city, and he could not help thinking, "We are all dead; we're going to die. There is not going to be one to live through this. And those not killed in battle will be killed in torture. What are we going to do?" That was after Isaiah had said, "Trust in God, don't make alliances." Now, it had become too late for outside alliances. Hezekiah had trusted in God, and things were now worse than ever. It was too late now to trust in alliances and the strong arms of flesh. Now, we will see whether trust in God is reliable or not.

That night 185,000 Assyrian warriors are slain by an angel. The rest of the Assyrian army ran for their lives, the people of Jerusalem come out of the city to plunder the Assyrian tents, goods, and weapons that had been abandoned. They have more after trusting God than they had before.

God wants us to do the same thing. When the nearing tribulation begins, see it as redemptive. We all are in error in some way. And so when the trial comes, it is to get you to realize your missteps with God, i.e. where am I wrong? Once your faith is placed back in God, and you get back on His path for you, then that makes that tribulation redemptive for your life. You have in the midst of a hard time gained a benefit. "All things work together for the good of those who love the Lord and are called according to the purpose of God."⁴ Let's look to the benefit of trusting God when Antichrist mounts a government siege against us in the near future.

⁴ Romans 8:28.

Trust in God does not excuse us from doing the prudent things of preparation. For example, Hezekiah built a water tunnel in preparation for a possible siege. In the case of a siege, he knew that the city would collapse within 3 or 4 days without water. So, the prudent thing was to develop a water source for the city.

Dependence upon God does not eliminate our work and preparation for trials. Dependence upon God actually makes your work and preparation productive and effectual. This is the principle of being in yoke with God. You do the work and God supplies the direction and power. So Hezekiah imagined a siege, and it occurred to him that they would all die within a week if they don't have water, so he decided to do the prudent thing and trust in God. So, he got his affairs of life in order. And as a king he had to get the city's affairs in order.

Now you may have to get your family's affairs in order. You may have to get your business in order, you have to be sure that you and all of your affairs line up with the Word of God. Make sure that there is nothing out of line.

Debt does not line up with the Word of God. Don't increase your debt; start paying your debt off. Get it off of you. Line up with the Word of God. If you will do that, then you can count on God giving you the support in the middle of all hell breaking loose just like He did with Hezekiah and Isaiah. You can count on God.

Don't be deceived like others and start doubting God when tribulation hits, and it starts getting rough. Count it an honor and a privilege to suffer for your identification and loyalty to Jesus Christ.

There are going to be in this last terrible persecution many who are going to die because they want the better resurrection. Hebrews says that they choose not to live in

order to have the better resurrection.⁵ That is important.

You need to be sure that you fear God more than the machinations of man. If you disappoint God, you lose all. You can disappoint me and everybody else, but that is nothing compared to disappointing God. You must obey God in order to hear the words, "Well done, my good and faithful servant." That is what you want. Your fear should be of not hearing those words from God.

Chapter 32 moves to the kingdom age. In the kingdom age, the Holy King and his princes will rule in judgment. The anticipation of true judgment in government sounds thrilling to me. Understanding in communications will be prevalent (Isaiah 32:4). People are going to begin to understand what you are saying. When you are talking about the Lord and what is on your heart, people will hear that. You know how hard it is to find somebody to hear what you are saying now? Well, the kingdom age is going to have that clarity that we long for. When you are expressing what is in your heart, the hearer is going to know what you are saying. I look forward to that.

Verses 5 through 8 deal with another thing that is all screwed up. Right and wrong will be restored. Right will be right and the wrong will be wrong instead of what we have now. The vile person will continue to speak villainy, practice hypocrisy, and speak errors against the Lord. The saints will know and exemplify righteousness by walking their assigned paths. They won't cross over to join with their evil friends like they do now. Nor will the evil cross over and start saying what is right. Light and darkness are going to line up and be as they are supposed to

⁵ Hebrews 11:35.

be. The evil is supposed to be evil, and the good is supposed to be good.

Some people drag in late, and some people drag in early (laughter by the class over the commuter from Weslaco, TX arriving late again).⁶

Max: The last shall be first in the Kingdom (loud laughter again).

V: But now we come to a very puzzling part in verse 9. For the kingdom age, this warning here at this place looks like it is completely out of place.

Isaiah

32:9 Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters; give ear unto my speech.

32:10 Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless women: for the vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come.

32:11 Tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones: strip you, and make you bare, and gird [sackcloth] upon [your] loins.

32:12 They shall lament for the teats, for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine.

32:13 Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns [and] briars; yea, upon all the houses of joy [in] the joyous city:

32:14 Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks;

God was saying that all manner of good judgment was going to happen, but when He comes to the women, His tone changes. Why is it that He speaks so negatively about the women? It seems out of place to me, and I don't know how to explain this, but maybe you guys, especially you women, have some insight that you could share.

⁶ This man was commuting about 500 miles via airplane from Weslaco to Dallas. He then rented a car and drove about 30 miles to Fort Worth for this class. After class at 9 P.M., he had to reverse this route.

Terry: Child bearing is of high importance, but these verses indicate barrenness is more important to these women. It also appears to indicate that they are leaning on the flesh rather than leaning on God.

Jackie: What did you mean by kingdom age?

V: This whole chapter 32 is indicative of the millennial reign.

Helen: Maybe these women have chosen to be at ease instead of fulfilling their function.

Freddy: People will be still having children at that time. Life is still going to be going on, and Christ is going to be ruling with God's order restored. It seems like the women will be abandoning that order.

Alberta: It says, "Rise up ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters." I think that they are lazy and carefree.

Larry: Freewill is part of God's creative order. They are making choices that cancel God's choice, e.g. abortion. God creates life, but they cancel God's creation by their choice to abort. That is what I see today. Abortion is so prevalent that it is like taking out the trash.

Helen: Verse 10 says, "For vintage shall fail, and the gathering shall not come." Maybe after abortions, the women will be unable to produce children.

Terry: I am speaking totally from a man's point of view. Young girls are careless with their virginity. They begin to have sex at an early age, and they are longing for something that is not going to come from sexual gratification. Promiscuity and abortion produce a barren lifestyle that is empty. God's order is the only way to a happy life.

Jim: Maybe it's more literal and means that they have been loafing when they are supposed to be out working away like the Proverbs 31 woman instead of being idle.

Mr. Gulley: Maybe it is both. God is a God of order, and He is saying that the women are out of their places. He wants them to come back in line with His Word and be what He has ordained them to be—mothers caring for their families.

Max: New King James uses the word complacent, which suggests a spiritual standpoint which would mean not pursuing after God's leading. Complacency would generate a lack of sowing, cultivating the plant, and reaping the spiritual fruit.

Larry: Both parents work many times in order to have more goods. This rebuke could be about the women not teaching their children. The complacency would be not bringing up the children in the way of the Lord so they will return to it.

V: The things that all of you have said make sense to me. I think that spiritual complacency concerning the children is an important thing that we need to put on the table. Abortion also may be another issue.

Helen: Women seem to prefer work to keeping house, preparing food, and dealing with the children.

Mr. Gulley: Verse 14 says that the palace shall be forsaken. That is probably talking about the home, the family, and the church. We are all at ease by not doing the things that we have been called to do.

V: Some women seem to obsess in their desire to become pastors and deacons and to teach the men. There is a great hunger and thirst for leadership positions in the church.

Helen: Things are going wild at home because there is nobody there. The houses are empty during the daytime.

Larry: They are empty of the Spirit too.

Vickie: Many mothers must work these days, and I am in that group. However, I am getting a job so that I can have the same hours as my kids. But still yet, working mothers can still find a way to teach their kids morals and values and try to supervise them.

Freddy: Judah was at "ease" with their religion. Likewise, the women were at "ease" with their home and children responsibilities. It seems like God is saying that work or no work we still cannot forsake our responsibilities. Judah was comfortable with their sacrifices and the women were comfortable with their motherly sacrifices.

V: Very good point, Freddy.

Wanda: Our nation's first lady said that it takes a village to raise a child. The implication is that we turn over our children and our responsibilities to society.

V: This passage is very difficult to understand, but there is a commandment right there in this indictment. It says, "Rise up ye women that are at ease; hear My voice, you careless daughters." I think there is something missing in Judah and also right now with us in the church. There is a call for the women to rise up. Now how that is interpreted, I don't know, but we don't want to revert to the precepts of men to interpret that command. The women should respond to God by rising up, and getting out of this ease business. And the daughters need to be listening to His voice and not being so complacent and careless.

I agree with Terry. There needs to be some tightening way down on this sexual stuff. The Christian homes need discipline in every area, but especially concerning promiscuity. There is a responsibility and accountability on the part of the individual to say no and behave according to God's

morality. And if the women don't rise up, what are the daughters going to do? They are going to continue to be complacent and careless, and abortions will continue to be prevalent.

The command for the women to rise up out of their ease⁷ should be interpreted by each individual woman because I can't figure out what this means. Maybe this command is specific to the individual woman.

The ease that the women are enjoying is not meeting their God-defined and natural responsibilities. God's rest is achieved only through meeting our responsibilities. These women are in their own rest, and that means that they are not in God's rest. And He is saying, "Rise up, get out of that ease that you are gravitating to, and get into deep water, fight these monsters, and struggle the rest of your life. When you do that, your daughters are not going to be complacent and careless. They are going to have a wonderful example to follow. Somebody has got to say this. Our daughters have got to hear this. A daughter can only hear so much from a father. A daughter will hear the mother's behavior before she hears the words of the mother.

Brandon: This Scripture would apply: "The aged women likewise, that [they be] in behaviour as becometh holiness, . . . That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children."⁸

V: Yes. I am not an expert in this by a long shot. That is why I would defer to the women to interpret this command. Something has got to change in our homes.

Oscar: Proverbs 31:10 says: "Who can find a virtuous woman?" A virtuous woman would be one who is not at ease, but is one that is striving to better her home.

V: Yes. I think that God wants the women to step up to the plate and get after it. God's rest is different from our rest and our ease. Our ease wastes our lives; God's rest challenges our lives. We must accept His challenges and go the long, hard way through self-denial, cross-bearing, following of Jesus.

Mr. Gulley: That verse 10 says, "Many days and years shall you be troubled." If a woman doesn't do what she is supposed to do in the home, then the children end up being like what we have—rampant sex, violence, drugs, gangs, disrespectful of authorities to the point that parents are knuckling under to the children. The evidence says that we have been at ease concerning our responsibilities.

V: Yes. We are not stepping up and achieving God's rest. Instead, we are shrinking back and attaining our own rest. And our own rest is directly opposite of what God's rest is according to what we studied in Hebrews.

This challenge to women comes right here in the middle of everything being straightened out and looking good. And then right behind that comes the Spirit upon us all as a reward for the women's stepping up. The women can bless the families and thereby bless their country and the churches.

Chapter 33 depicts the doctrine of salvation. It begins with the spoiler against the world. The spoiler's victory over the world gives us our need for salvation. Verse 2 is the prayer for salvation: "Lord, be gracious unto us . . . our salvation also in the time of trouble."

⁷ This one thing that I can tell you about rest is from the book of Hebrews. When God said, "I have a rest for you," it is His rest. When you enter into God's rest, it is through hell on earth; it is tough; it is running the race and getting into deep water and fighting all manner of oppressive monsters that come after you. God's rest is not through ease. It is through much effort, much strain, and much work.

⁸ Titus 2:3-4.

Now, salvation is being given to us in analogical terms here. The first thing that happens after the prayer of salvation is that the Lord starts giving us something that is described in verse 5. And then the response is that we give the Lord something.

So verse 5 begins to delineate all that God gives Zion: (1) judgment (2) righteousness (3) wisdom (4) knowledge (5) stability (6) strength of salvation. This is an immediate pouring out by God. When we pray the prayer of salvation, God immediately begins to give us these things. And then we are to give the Lord something, and that is in verse 6: "The fear of the Lord is His treasure."

We have come in a complete circle. We began the class talking about fear. Now we are talking about fear once again. So when you pray to the Lord, He gives you these bountiful gifts. What do you give in turn? Fear. That is the first step before and after our prayer of salvation.

Then the second step deals with the sinners among God's people. Class, we are talking about religious hypocrites in the church here.

Isaiah 33:14-16

The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? 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."

Just as there are two kinds of God's people in Zion, there are two kinds of God's people in the church. One kind is the lost sinner, and that kind has fear of the burning fire. The other kind is the saved sinner. His fear is about his works being tested by the fire. Your works of wood,

hay, and stubble⁹ are going to flash like a striking match, and there goes your whole life burned up. But the things that are going stand are those things of faith, those things that were done out of the fear of the Lord that brings about discipleship.

Two kinds of fear are being addressed. One kind of fear is addressed in verse 6; the other kind of fear is addressed in verse 14. The people that walk righteously in verse 15 are of the first kind of fear, i.e. fear of displeasing the Lord. And that is where we started in this lesson.

The third step is in verse 20, and it is looking into the future. Jerusalem, the future city of Zion, is going to have a permanent, eternal tabernacle. It says a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not any of the stakes removed or any cords broken. Class, I am leaving you with this mystery concerning the making permanent of a tabernacle in the temple-city of Jerusalem.

Isaiah

33:21 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 gallant ship pass thereby.

Now what kind of a place is this with the wide river and wide streams upon which no ships will pass? What are rivers and streams to God? In the book of Revelation, the fresh water symbolizes the Christianity, and the sea symbolizes religion. Thus the broad rivers symbolize a broad Christianity with broad knowledge, wisdom, and judgment. Thus there are going to be good Christians in the future city.

⁹ 1 Corinthians 3:12-15.

There are going to be some streams also.¹⁰ All this fresh water is going to be God's refreshing, life-giving Christian Spirit. At last, the teachings and preaching's are not going to be the words of man; they are going to be the Words of God. And it says here: "But there the glorious LORD [will be] unto us a place of broad rivers [and] streams."¹¹ That means the clergy are going to be lined up under God. There is not going to be any of this foolishness that is passing for clergy today. It is going to be a good alignment. We, the fresh water Christians, are going to be truly refreshed and refreshing. There is going to be a spiritual quickening throughout the land.

Now here is the mystery. There are not going to be any galleys with oars, and there

¹⁰ Springs and streams symbolize the clergy of Christianity in the book of Revelation.

¹¹ Isaiah 33:21.

are not going to be any gallant ships in these rivers, these broad rivers and broad streams. You that have had the book of Revelation don't blurt out the answer. I want the class to have to think about this.

What are the ships that God is talking about? And then in verse 23, He even says the ships are going to begin to be dismantled:

Isaiah

33:23 Thy tacklings are loosed; they could not well strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail: then is the prey of a great spoil divided; the lame take the prey.

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

Ponder those wide streams and wide rivers that don't have any ships in them, and then even the ships that are there are going to be dismantled.

Chapter Questions

1. What is the woe on God's people?
2. What are the two kinds of fear in God's people?

Chapter 9

REDEMPTION FOR ISRAEL**GOD BOTH DISCIPLINES AND FORGIVES HIS PEOPLE**

God states that He is going to comfort His people, and He is going to pardon their iniquity (Isaiah 40:1). Please see that this pardon comes after great pain: “for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.”¹ The reason that Judah is receiving double for all her sins is because God expects His people to toe the line. “To whom much is given, much is required.”² If God gives God’s people instructions and they do not follow those instructions, there is more guilt for their disobedience than there is for the common person who is not a child of God. You must understand that judgment comes first to the house of God because “to whom much is given, much is required.”³

You have seen verse 3 in the New Testament about John the Baptist.

Isaiah

40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

God is giving His people hope. Certainly, it comes in forgiveness. Yes, we want pardon, but we also see the threat of receiving double from the hand of God, and that scares us. The hope that comes is expressed by the voice crying in the wilderness: “Prepare ye the way of the Lord.” The hope is in the Lord’s coming.

¹ Isaiah 40:2.

² Luke 12:48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few [stripes]. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

³ *Ibid.*

What is it that Isaiah says will endure? Verse 8 says, “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.” The answer is the Word of God. Our hope is founded on the trustworthiness of the Word of God. Thus, God’s Word promises double discipline, the Lord’s coming, and great pardon for our iniquities.

GOD CONTRASTED WITH IDOLS

Verse 10 expresses the power and the greatness of God. He has the strength of a king and the power to give rewards. Please notice that the time reference is for a future work, i.e. the work of the coming Messiah.

Certainly, the time reference for the Messiah’s first coming is future to Isaiah’s time, but it is in the past for us. He came in the incarnation, which was in our past. He is present via the Holy Spirit with us in our walks, and He will be coming again in our future as expressed next,

Isaiah

40:10 Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong [hand], and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward [is] with him, and his work before him.

Our Messiah-King has not only this great strength, but He has gentleness. Verse 11 describes His present work as a shepherd with his flock. The verbs feed, gather, carry, and lead describe the progressive nature of sanctification. Again the time reference for Jesus is past (first coming to sacrifice and pay for sin), present (seek and save the lost via empowerment of His disciples), and future (second coming to judge and rule). These time references correspond to the doctrine of salvation’s justification, sanctification, and glorification in reference to us.

Isaiah

40:11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry [them] in his bosom, [and] shall gently lead those that are with young.

Notice the contrast of God's dealings with His people. The Messiah-King has great strength, but He is very gentle with that strength when dealing with His young flock. On the other hand, He gives double pain in the discipline of His unruly people.

Verse 13 explores one of the factors of the Messiah's greatness. That factor is His great knowledge and understanding of how to use it. Understanding how to **use** (by fearing God) the knowledge that God gives us is the definition of wisdom.

Isaiah

40:13 Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or [being] his counsellor hath taught him?

40:14 With whom took he counsel, and [who] instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?

40:15 Behold, the nations [are] as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance:

Verse 18 asks to whom or to what are you going to compare to God? Compared to God, the power and judgment of all of the great nations are nothing more than a speck of dust on the scale (v. 15). Thus, when you know the greatness of God, then worship of man-made idols, as described in verse 19, becomes an absurdity.

Isaiah

40:19 The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains.

Notice the absurdity of idolatry. When you compare God and His greatness with the absurdity of worshipping something made with your hands, you move into the irrational

realm. You will have lost your mind. But idolatry was and still is a huge problem for God's people.

In this lesson tonight, there will be some shocking things that we are going to look at. But right here in this contrast between the greatness of God and the absurdity of idolatry is where God's children reside.

Terry: In that Scripture, God is strictly telling us straight out that He is the Standard. We seem to always compare ourselves with other people or with the world's standards. We pass muster when we use the wrong standard.

V: Yeah, when God is our standard, we all come up short.

Larry: God's Word is the reed.

V: Yeah, The Greek word *canon* means reed/stick/rod, and now the Canon/Bible is the measuring reed/stick/rod by which we are measured.

All right now, let's look at the first mystery that is mentioned here in verse 27.

God Can't See What I Am Doing?

Isaiah

40:27 Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?

How can the people of God behave in such a way that they actually believe that God can't see what they are doing, and that God's judgment is going to pass over them? That is a mystery. The reason it is a mystery is because God is observing everything, and yet sometimes the child of God behaves like God can't see what is happening. And when they think that God can't see what is happening, then they think they are going to come into the judgment and they are going stand there, and God is going to say, "Ah, yeah, I didn't see you do anything wrong. Yeah, all I saw when I looked at you was the Blood of My

Perfect, Only-Begotten Son covering you.” That is what God’s people think today.

The people of God during Isaiah’s time just thought simply that God’s transcendence prevented Him from actually seeing their behavior. Besides that, their annual sacrifices took care of any bad behavior that happened to be observed by God.

Class, the blood of Christ takes care of your personhood via justification. However, your works of sanctification are under God’s continuous, minute scrutiny and will be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ, your works judgment. This is where sanctification comes into play. Our works will not penalize our personhoods,⁴ but they will greatly impact our rewards for eternity.

The Judgment Seat of Christ is a future judgment, but God is at work giving us current guidance. The Lord sees our current works and uses His Rod of discipline and His Staff of guidance (Ps. 23) to give us help to maintain a life of sanctification in which our works are good and on His assigned path.

But for those who are willing to toe the line, God’s Power is going to be given in their behalf.

Isaiah

40:29 He giveth power to the faint; and to [them that have] no might he increaseth strength.

40:30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

40:31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew [their] strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; [and] they shall walk, and not faint.

⁴ The only place that I can find in which the Christian’s works could possibly affect his personhood is when they divorce Jesus by recanting their faith and remarry Antichrist by taking his mark.

God will help you if you will just turn away from idolatry, and fear God enough to obey Him. We must believe in the power of God and His absolute sovereignty and not be worshipping the things made with hands or even worshipping ourselves as the centers of the universe. If you will deny yourself, and practice the *kenosis*, then God will give you the power to walk through all of the opposing things on your path. And when we are old and run against the young men, we who wait upon God will still be running when the young man falls.

Okay, now let’s go to **Isaiah 41** which focuses on the idolatrous nations. God is foretelling of His coming judgments that are going to occur over a century from Isaiah’s time. God is going to get specific and even start naming names. And this is where people have a problem with the book of Isaiah because Isaiah begins to name people that are going to come into existence long after he names them. And so some scholars believe that there are two books of Isaiah written centuries apart and joined together as one book. They cannot believe that God’s Word written by His prophet can foretell the future.

Isaiah

41:1 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.

All right—he is going to bring the nations, including His Own people, to judgment because they are idolatrous.

THE ABSURDITY OF IDOLATRY

Isaiah

41:6 They helped every one his neighbour; and [every one] said to his brother, Be of good courage.

41:7 So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, [and] he that smootheneth [with] the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It [is] ready for the sodering: and

he fastened it with nails, [that] it should not be moved.

Everybody is working together as a team of workers and encouragers in the making of dumb, dead, unmovable idols. Neighbors, brothers, and workmen are all involved. For this they are going to be judged, and the nations, all the nations of the world at that known time are going to come under judgment, and they are going to fall to Babylon, and then Babylon because it is idolatrous is going to fall to Persia. Persia is going to have a king called Cyrus, and Cyrus is going to become a Gentile servant of God. And God is going to use him to send His people back to their homeland for a new start by providing them supplies and the authority to build the temple, to renew the city walls, and reestablish Judaism back in Jerusalem.⁵

This historical example of idolatry shows the absurdity of people making their gods so that they can bow down and worship creations of their own hands. But now when He focuses on Israel, He's got some good things to say about them for their future.

Remember that when God names Israel, we sometimes don't know whether He is talking about Israel or Judah because Israel is, in God's naming of His holy land, the whole kingdom which includes both Israel and Judah. Sometimes He addresses the southern kingdom as Israel even though it is Judah. But to God His people are all Israel. It doesn't matter whether men divide up and make a northern kingdom of Israel and a southern kingdom called Judah. God doesn't abide by men's rules. He calls them Israel because that is who they are!

So He says to His Israel:

⁵ Cyrus of Persia gave Israel the authority and the resources to displace the Palestinians and re-establish Palestine as the homeland of the Jews. According to the Law of the Medes and Persians, this declaration is unbreakable. Now, Persia (Iran) is determined to annihilate Israel and give the land to the Palestinians.

Isaiah

41:10 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.

Isaiah

41:13 For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.

41:14 Fear not, thou worm Jacob, [and] ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

Now this is in stark contrast to the other idolatrous nations. Even though God said that Israel's doubly disciplinary judgment is coming, He is going to redeem them afterwards. God tells them to fear not and be not dismayed by their discipline because He is going to help them. He is going to redeem His people by lifting them up with His right Hand of righteousness.

And so, when you go through this kind of discipline that God brings to His people, fear not even though it is going to hurt double. Fear not and be not dismayed because He is going to reach down and lift you up with His strong right hand of redemption. He is setting up the stage here for a future redeemer who will act for all of the world just as God is acting for Israel.

Next, God begins to issue challenges to the idols.

Isaiah

41:23 Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye [are] gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold [it] together.

This is a challenge. God is now saying to all of the idols that these people have made. He is saying, "Okay, idols, let's see what you've got. Do something. Can you do good? Well, can you do evil? Can you do anything besides just sit there?" God's chal-

lenge is for the idols to prove themselves by doing something that we can all behold together.

Now you would think that the people of God are looking now at the idols waiting for them to do something, right? Why is it such a mystery to me that idols need no proof for us to worship them? The mystery of how can people reach such a low level of intelligence is going to be re-issued in a minute.

God's people chop a log from a tree, start cutting out a shape by cutting off the excess, and whittle off flakes of wood to complete the form of a bull or whatever. Then they take it to the goldsmith who hammers gold plating around it so that it becomes a beautiful shiny bull. Next, they use the whittled flakes to make a fire to cook their food and give a burnt offering to the shiny bull. The mystery is that after they do this, they pick up the inert, dead idol, put it on a table, and worship and pray to it. It says nothing. It does nothing. It just sits there, and the people think that it blesses them for their sacrifices to it.

Terry: It is kind of cool how God refuses to acknowledge their existence at all as a living being. Just as He refuses to compare them to Himself—He's the standard. He doesn't even give them a place. They are nothing.

V: That's right; they are nothing. The mystery remains that our people are devoting their period of sanctification to so many things other than God.

So, we look at this making of idols by Israel, and it seems absurd. But yet, here we are doing the same thing. We can see the faults in others, but we can't see them in ourselves.

PROPHECY OF THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST

Isaiah

42:1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold;

mine elect, [in whom] my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

42:2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

42:3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

42:4 He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

Isaiah 42:1 announces the Lord's baptismal formula that connects with Psalms 2:7 and Matthew 3:17. Isaiah 42:1 indicates that the Messiah will be God's Elect and that He will delight God with His Work. This formula is restated by the voice that comes down from heaven at the Lord's baptism:

Matthew 3:17

And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

This statement from the Father in heaven declares that Jesus is God's Son begotten, not created, in human history. This part of the formula about Jesus' Sonship is announcing His Royalty which connects with the word Elect in the Isaiah statement.

The Psalm passage also treats the Lord's royalty through His Son ship.

Psalms 2:7

I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou [art] my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

Thus, the baptismal formula in Matthew 3:17 specifies that Jesus fulfills two parts of prophecy. The first part pertains to His Personhood; He is the King Elect (Is. 42:1) of all of creation because He is the Son of God (Ps. 2:7). The second part pertains to Jesus' Works that are linked into the Isaiah and Matthew formulas by God's statements: "in whom my soul delighteth" and "in whom I am well pleased." God is affirming both at

the same time that Jesus is the suffering servant of God and also God's Son Who is King and Elect.

Even though Jesus is the Royal Son of God, He is going to come to earth two times in order to fulfill both motifs. The first time He comes is to *suffer* by paying our sin debt. The second time is to *rule*. At His second coming, everybody will bow down and exalt Him by confessing that He is Lord. And those two comings are the fulfillment, then, of the prophecies of Isaiah 42:1 and Psalms 2:7 as found restated in Matthew 3:17.

In His second coming, He will be rewarding His saints by sharing His Royal inheritance with all who are in Him. The proportions of the inheritance will be set by our proportions of the *kenotic* sanctification of suffering that we adopted as He did.⁶

Man! Do you realize the gift that you have been given via your justification? Do you realize that you don't have to pay one thing for the penalty for your sin? It has been paid!

So then, I ask what do you have to lose if you already have your justification? Class, it is imperative that you know that you've still got something to lose. You can lose the "Well done, my good and faithful servant" which derives from your sanctification part of salvation. You can lose all of the royal inheritance that has been stored up for you. You can end up a pauper in heaven; you can lose your crowns, your mansion, and even your clothes⁷ that He has for you. Not only has Jesus given you freedom from your punishment for your sin debt by justifying you, He is ready to hand you more rewards for your yielding to His path of suffering in the *Missio Dei* during your sanctification. It is almost unfathomable that a sinner like me gets to go to heaven without paying for my sin debt, and then in heaven I get to share in the Lord's

inheritance if I share in His ongoing *kenotic* mission.

When you start thinking about this, you can't help but marvel at how the baptismal formula prophesied in Isaiah 42:1 maps out the Lord's Person and Works that we get to share in via justification, sanctification, and glorification. How can this be?

He took our punishment. He took your punishment that you owed before you became a Christian. Now that you are a Christian, when you mess up, you have a High Priest to plead your sin under His Own sacrifice, and He can do this because He lives! He came in His first coming as God's sacrifice and Man's High Priest. His sacrifice ended at His death, but His High Priesthood did not end at His death because He was raised to live forever. He did it all before you knew Him. He did it because He knew you and loved you enough to do it.

How can He love a wretch like you? He must have some big plans for you in His path of sanctification that He designed just for you.

The Suffering Servant's Mission

As a suffering servant, Jesus had a mission to perform, and that mission is delineated in verse 7.

Isaiah
42:7 To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, [and] them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

So His mission is two-fold. It is to *restore our sight* and to *set us free*. And when we get our sight restored and we are set free, we will sing a new song. That new song is prophesied in Isaiah 42:10 and fulfilled in Revelation 5:9.

So we are now able to see and we are unshackled from our old sin nature. We are able to walk on our paths of sanctification, but we have to battle our wills in order to activate

⁶ Romans 8:17.

⁷ Revelation 3:18

our unshackled abilities. We battle against our self-wills because God gives all mankind freedom of will. That means that we can choose our actions to obey or disobey. As a result, our sanctification is composed of our choices in life: *Kenosis* or self-exaltation? You choose.

Isaiah

42:16 . . . These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

42:17 They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, Ye [are] our gods.

42:18 Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see.

42:19 Who [is] blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger [that] I sent? who [is] blind as [he that is] perfect, and blind as the LORD'S servant?

These are some really condemning words here for God's people who are supposed to be on the same mission as Jesus. Israel, the one that He elected and sent is blind and deaf? The mystery is, how can this be for God's people that they/you be first blind and second deaf, and the third thing is in prison (v. 22). Before redemption, they were blind and in prison. Now, they are blind, in prison, and *deaf*.

Isaiah

42:22 . . . and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore.

Why do they not say, "restore"? because they are blind and *deaf* and in prison. Any Christian who is blind, deaf, and in prison, does not say, "restore." Now I want you to see something here because of idolatry: there is a third factor added. The mission for the suffering servant was twofold: to make you able to see and to give you freedom. Now when you've been given this new sight, and freedom, and you turn to idols, you are going to have three things wrong with you instead

of two things. You are going to be blind, in prison, *and deaf*.

All through the book of Revelation, God says, "He that hath an **ear**, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." This is the problem with God's people. It's not the same problem as with the lost people. The lost people are blind and in prison, but they can hear. It is God's people who can't hear when they turn to idols. That is why you can preach until you are blue in the face and nothing happens in the church. You can preach and warn, preach and warn, preach and warn, and what happens? "Good sermon, preacher, I enjoyed your sermon." Or you might hear: "Oh! You stepped on my toes today preacher." You've heard many things like this. But you know who is receiving the Word of God? the person who is ignorant but not worshipping idols. The person who is worshipping idols can't even hear⁸ the Word of God because he is comfortable in his idolatry. Oh, he can hear the titillating words, and it brings superficial conviction, and he may sorrowfully walk the aisle and make commitments. But he will return to his comfortable idolatry like the dog to its vomit.

Terry: This charge is against God's people. We can't go out and effectively do our jobs when our hearts are not right.

V: And we can't even hear the jobs given to us by God. This is a charge against God's people. At the time of Isaiah, it was God's people in Judah who are supposed to be hearing Isaiah. God warned Isaiah in the beginning, right? He said, "You just preach and preach, and they aren't going to hear.

⁸ You can hear in two ways. Hearing with the accusative direct object is the way that changes you because the Word of God reaches all the way into your spirit. You can determine this case by parsing the nouns used by God. When you hear God's Word in the accusative case, you will understand it and be enabled to assimilate and apply it. But when you hear it in any other case, it is without true understanding, assimilation, and application.

And then Isaiah asked, “How long shall I preach?” God answers: “Till there is nobody left.” This is the hard part for me. I normally tell someone one or two times, maybe three times, but if there is no change, then I am prone to turn to a more fertile ground.

This passage is an awesome warning. When it dawned on me that the people of God are worse off after turning to idols than they were before turning to idols, it scared me. I don’t know whether or not it scares you like it does me.

I’ve got some real warning to put to you here. “To whom much is given, much is required.”⁹ Certainly you know that a little bitty baby doesn’t have the same standards as a Christian warrior. And so if I demand that you walk at a level that is far beyond your maturation stage, it would be unreasonable of me. So what I’ve got to do here is allow the Spirit to work with you because I can’t be your conscience and your guide on the various levels that you all are at. All I can do is just teach you and then I pray that you will have the ability and sense to hear. And then God can do a lot with you. Several of you have already demonstrated a lot of change from when I had you in class a semester or two ago.

Max: Two semesters ago and . . . in this same room!

V: Oh yeah, I remember! What I am seeing here is growth and response because you guys had ears to hear. Now I shouldn’t have to tell you the specific kinds of ministries that God is leading you to. God does that, and then you can tell me.

Class, as I taught these several in here several semesters ago, I could see the Spirit stirring up in their souls. I could see how their wills were surrendering and couldn’t be stopped from committing to God’s path for

them to follow Jesus wherever He leads and to do whatever He asks.

Terry: Because of this spiritual condition that God’s people are in today, there is very little repentance. Few in my church are breaking down and coming to the front and saying that what they are doing is not right, and that they have blown it.

V: Yes, Terry, that is the symptom of the deafness resulting from idolatry. On the other hand, look at what is happening with Randall’s revival.¹⁰ Apparently he has found a group of people who have ears. Even though the old kind of revival is one in which you preach to the lost, Randall is instead preaching to the saved. What he is doing is giving them what they need to hear in order to get on God’s path. In this kind of revival, there will be a ton of people saved *afterwards* because of the qualitative improvement within the group of born again Christians who are supposed to do the work of the ministry. God says over and over again, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying *to the churches*.”

When John wrote to the church at Ephesus, he didn’t write to an institutional church with a steeple on it. He wrote to a group of Christians. He said to them, “*If* you don’t repent, this is what is going to happen to you. But *if* you have an ear, hear what the Spirit says unto you.” John’s letters¹¹ indicate that he anticipates that not all the people are going to hear. Just a few Christians will have ears to hear. And if they can hear the Word because their hearing is not blocked with idols, there is going to be a response and a change in their lives. New missions and ministries are going to break out. New love is going to be restored. Behavior is going to be

⁹ Luke 12:48

¹⁰ Randall is the student that Dr. Vinson nicknamed Trouble. When his wife started taking classes, she was dubbed Mrs. Trouble. This class was during the time that Randall was an evangelist, not a pastor.

¹¹ Revelation. 2-3.

changed to the point where the others are going to look with awe upon them and say, “These people are not normal.” And there will be a great harvest that is going to come from outside of the church just because some of God’s people have ears. This scenario was demonstrated by the repentance brought forth from John the Baptist’s preaching.

The saints that have their ears blocked because of idols demonstrate the other scenario today. They have returned to a state of imprisonment and blindness also with deafness added as a new disablement.

I find Christians groping around because they can’t figure out whether abortion is wrong or right. You say, “Abortion is wrong,” and they say, “I can’t hear it! I will not hear it.” Class, we’ve got Christians who can’t figure out right from wrong—they are groping around and saying the politically correct things, like allowing homosexuals to marry each other. You preach what God says about homosexuality and divorce and abortion, and they cannot hear you. They cannot hear God’s Word.

Brandon: Somebody that’s born again, can really get off in idolatry?

V: Oh, yeah. All it takes is to turn to yourself as your own self-willed master.

Class, here is the cure!

Isaiah

42:23 Who among you will give ear to this? [who] will hearken and hear for the time to come?

Who will hear? It is the same thing in the book of Revelation. Whoever’s got an ear, let him hear. Who will hear? I wonder if we should start having church services that go like this: Okay, everybody that is going to hear stay here. Everybody that is not, get out! (class laughter).

Terry: It would force them to make a conscious decision.

V: Yes, that is something that they may not be doing to this point in time. Their choices are unconscious, self-willed decisions for climbing in the upside down *kenosis*.

Terry: My dad gave an invitation one time that whoever wants to accept the Lord, stand up. He had them stand up and then sit down. Then he said that whoever does not want to accept the Lord, stand up.

V: One time I was making spontaneous hospital visits. In one of the rooms, I encountered a guy who responded negatively to my offer to pray for him. So, I started praying and telling the Lord that the guy did not want His help that he wanted to handle his illness without Him. The guy stopped me in a panic because the threat of losing divine help was too much for him. That gave me a chance to present the Gospel to the guy. He didn’t get saved, but he became very open to prayer for his healing.

THE EIGHT BENEFITS OF REDEMPTION

1. You are called by name.

Isaiah

43:1 . . . Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called [thee] by thy name; thou [art] mine.

43:2 When thou passest through the waters, I [will be] with 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.

43:3 For I [am] the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt [for] thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

43:4 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.

God is going to sacrifice His only begotten Son for Israel and you. He continues to sacrifice for you; He gives other people to

save your life. He may give you to save someone else's life.

Billy. Is fire referring to judgment or punishment?

V: Neither. Fire is the trials of life. When you get to the book of Revelation, the Lord is going to appear there with burnished brassen feet. Those kinds of feet have been walking through the fire until they are beautiful shiny brass feet. All the impurities are burned out because He walked through all the trials of a sacrificial life. "Beautiful are the feet. . . ."

2. You are a possession of God.
3. You are accompanied by God through rivers and fire. That would be through the trials of the *kenosis* in our sanctification.
4. You are precious in God's sight.

God says, "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." This is the following of the Christ example. Jesus was given for us. He was sacrificed for our lives; He was given by God the Father for us, for our welfare. Now God says, "I am going to give men for you. I am going to give men for your welfare; I am going to give men for your life." God is going to sacrifice men for the lives of His people.

Guess who He is going to sacrifice? He is going to sacrifice you. You, in this room, you are the called-out sacrifices. Because you are studying Isaiah, you are going to walk the path of the suffering servant, the *kenosis*. You are the ones who are going to give your lives for the sake of the people outside of this room. You are the ministers of God. The minister of God loves self-sacrificially; you are called to give your life as a ransom for those who are in bondage.

If you can hear what I am saying to you, if idols are not blocking your ears, then please

see the mission that you are on, and walk in that mission, giving your lives sacrificially for the people. You are called; you are commissioned; you have been purchased with the greatest price known to man. You are not your own, you belong to another, and you are His resource to be spent at His pleasure, not your pleasure, at His pleasure because you belong to Him. You are called, and there is no escape, now, from this call. If you've got ears to hear, hear what the Spirit is saying to you, the church. When you leave this room, you'll never be able to say that nobody ever told you. You have been told, you have been given an example, and we are studying it. You also know what can happen to you if you turn to an idol. You will become deaf. Sure, you can escape all this hard life of sacrifice, but you are going to end up with nothing in heaven.

You know how you end up with something? by sacrificing now. If you can sacrifice now, you are going to celebrate for eternity. You are going to hug my neck—I won't be able to get away from you. (Raucous laughter throughout the room). Class, you have everything to gain if you will just give your all now in the *kenosis*.

Terry. Could giving people for the lives of others be not only of sacrificing God's people for God's people but also for lost people? Lost people are not God's people, but they are still valuable in God's sight.

V: Yes, this sacrifice refers to the cost of *kenotic* ministry regardless for whom the sacrifices are intended.

If we have ears, we will take this commission. We will take the same mission that Jesus was on. We will be the suffering servants of Christ with His same methodology as demanded by the *kenosis*. You are called to sacrificial suffering, knowing that you are a child of the King. You are kings and priests of God, you will rule in eternity, but right now you are His slaves on the same mission

as the Lord was on. He came the first time to suffer and give His life as a ransom for many, and He comes the second time to rule. You are on the same timetable. You are here now to suffer, and then you come to rule.

Now what is the great lie? You are here to rule, not suffer, in your present life. You are here to be served rather than to serve others. You are a king and you want to climb up to your throne now. This is the upside down *kenosis*. You are convinced that your judgment of works is going to go like this—the Lord is going to say, “You sat on your throne so wonderfully during your time of sanctification, I could hardly believe how wonderful you looked in your earthly throne. So, I will give you a crown and another throne to rule from for eternity.”

No, folks, it will not go like that. If you don’t prove your love for Jesus via your devotional sacrifices for His mission, then He will not be able to trust your devotion to His missions in heaven. No, if you love and indulge yourself instead of sacrificing to Him during this time of testing, i.e. during your sanctification, then don’t expect Him to share His rewards from His sanctification with you.

So, we’ve got to abandon our thrones of the upside down *kenosis*. Get down on your hands and knees and wash the feet of the other saints and take the message outside of the church because that is where the lost people are.¹²

Now one good thing about the lost people is that they still have ears. Have you ever experienced teaching a Sunday school class a wonderful lesson that just knocks your socks off with excitement, but nothing happens to your class members? On the other hand, you can teach a lesson in prison, and the inmates will grab every word, get saved, or revived

¹² I show you how to do evangelism much more effectively in the evangelism course via the whole-body *Missio Dei*.

because they’ve got ears. It is amazing what difference ears make. I like those big old ears (gesturing) hanging out all over the place (class laughter).

Brandon: Other examples of people giving their lives for us are from the Reformers who stood up for the truth.

V: Yes. Those men and women washed our feet with their life’s blood. We are riding the waves that were created by great men who gave their lives in the Reformation. You are to do the same thing.

Mr. Gulley: Would it be safe to say that idolatry, whatever it might be, is like a self-worship, a self-governing from your own ideas?

V: Yes, anything that promotes the opposite of the *kenosis* is idolatry. The *kenosis* is that you live your life of sanctification in sacrifice during your time on earth. Only after temporal life of downward sacrifice, does your life go up in eternal exaltation. The *kenosis* is commanded in Philippians 2:5-11. However, anything that entices you to climb up to the good life during your time on earth will displace your true ministry. That enticing thing is an idol. When you start that climb, you become deaf. If you persist in that climb, you will also become blind and imprisoned.

Helen: Idols can be just ideas. They don’t have to be . . .

V: . . . substantial. They can be an idea, a philosophy, a desire or love for wealth, power, status, reputation, sports, *et cetera* whenever it pulls you off path.

5. God loves you. *Agape* love is unilateral sacrifice for the welfare of the recipient. It is not for the welfare of the lover. It is for the welfare of the beloved.
6. God will sacrifice men for you.
7. You will be gathered by God.

8. You will be glorified.

All right now, those are the benefits of redemption. But there is a two-fold duty of redemption, too, and I want to show you what those are.

THE TWO-FOLD DUTY OF REDEMPTION

1. You are God's witnesses.

Isaiah

43:12 I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when [there was] no strange [god] among you: therefore ye [are] my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I [am] God.

So when you are given all these benefits, then it becomes incumbent upon you, as your first duty, to witness that the Lord is God. Bringing this duty to the New Testament times, we witness that Jesus is the Lord. If you have received the benefits of salvation, then your duty is to testify that Jesus is Lord. Please note that you do not have to have the gift of evangelism in order to do this duty because it is assigned to all of us.

2. Holiness.

Isaiah

43:18 Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.

What is holiness? Holiness is to be a clean vessel that is set aside for God's sole use. Holiness means that you don't have use of yourself because you don't own yourself. Jesus owns you. You have been redeemed from one group, and put into another group, a group of people who have been cleansed of sin and sanctified for God's private use. Is it for the pastor's use? Nooooo. Is it for the church's use? Nooooo. Every part of the what, where, why, and who of ministry is to be determined directly by the Lord Jesus Christ alone! So now, we are not to remember the former things nor consider the things of old. When you are moved into the

kenosis of sanctification, when you become a holy person, you don't remember what you were trying to achieve. You know that before you were saved, you were supposed to do just like the world, and that is climb, climb, climb, get up that hill, get everything that you can get. But the saved person is supposed to become a disciple by denying himself, taking up his cross, and following Jesus by forgetting the old and pressing on toward the new.

The two-fold duty accompanying redemption is a life lesson in sanctification, i.e. witnessing and holiness.

When you were in and of the world, you were acting like the world, i.e. climbing. That was normal. But when you get saved and become a witness, you are to testify to who saved you and to reverse your climb. Now you are going down in sacrifice, and when you start this sanctification journey, you are not to remember the old upwards desires. This requires that we put our fleshly natures to death. This is our testing ground, folks, and it is the most difficult thing that you will ever do during the rest of your lives.

We must adopt the mind of Jesus in order to carry forth His Mission, the *Missio Dei*, which is to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). Hopefully, you can still hear enough to acquire the mind of Christ so that you can minister in that mind and also teach your people to do likewise.

So, after coming to our right minds, we go along just fine for a while. But then we get drawn off path by some enticement and start the climb once again. It takes a special act of God's Mercy, which usually involves pain in the opening up of our ears to hear God's command to re-adopt the *kenotic* life of sanctification. Then we can get back on path.

Discipleship is tough to do. It is impossible to do without God's empowerment. But each time we get off path, there is the terrify-

ing danger that we may never be given ears to hear in order to come to our right minds. Real discipleship is the most difficult life that you can ever live.

It is painful when God gives me new ears to hear with after I have gotten off path. He gives us ears by using His rod and staff to comfort us (Ps. 23). Comfort means to correct us and give us security in our following of Him. In other words, the restoration of our hearing comes via painful discipline from the Lord.

Max: When someone who is successful in their climb to success, wealth, and power, comes to salvation, they will usually keep climbing. They get locked into the upside down *kenosis*. They esteem themselves too highly, and their pride keeps them from fearing God. But they have no problem with praising God and giving Him glory while they are continuing to climb.

Terry: God says: “I have declared, and have saved, and I have showed, when there was no foreign god among you.”¹³ Could that be telling a new Christian that there is no other god, i.e. that God alone is God? It reemphasizes that idolatry is forbidden.

V: Oh, that is good, Terry. I believe that is exactly what it means.

When I was leading a group of street-preachers in Atlanta dubbed the Fishers of Men, our recruits never came out of the old church people. Now I am using old for people who had been in the church for a long time and were set in their ways. I had tried to recruit them, but it didn't work. So, I decided to try recruiting the newly saved. I wanted to get them before they got put into some kind of traditional, cradle-rocking setting. I would say, “Why don't you come with me and our street-preaching group. I bet you could do good in this ministry.” They would usually

agree because they didn't know any better. They would grow quickly and become wonderful ministers. Before long, they could readily see the difference between just being religious and being active in the *Missio Dei*.

Now, we come to another mystery.

Isaiah 43:22

But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.

There is no prayer and no hunger for God by God's people. Could today's church be weary of God? Are we content with our worship, traditions, programs, and selves? Can the church be content with all of that and not really want to pray to God for His direction? I ask because our prayers are usually for God to bless what we have decided to do. We may be tired of God's ways because He might mess us up with a call to actual holiness, which would displace our desires with God's desires.

The reason that this is a mystery is because God says to them, “I have not even asked you to do one thing! I have not caused you to make sacrifices, I have not caused you to offer incense, I have not asked one thing of you! And yet you are weary of me?” And then, He goes on further to say that you are making Him your servant, you are making Him weary.¹⁴ Class, we have abandoned the definition of disciple. To be the Lord's disciple, we must first *deny ourselves* and then *take up our crosses* and then *follow the Lord*. Our new definition is to reverse that formula. We indulge ourselves, cast down our crosses, and ask the Lord to follow us. Our prayers are to make God into a servant. We say, “Bless us as we go our own ways in self indulgence. Fix this. Heal me.”

We may think that we are on the *kenotic* path. But God says: “As soon as you got on your path, you started praying, ‘Lord, get me

¹³ Isaiah 43:12.

¹⁴ Isaiah 43:24.

out of this path. Make my path successful and easy; Lord, just put me up there; get me up at the top of success.” That is when the Holy Spirit prays for you because you don’t know how to pray for yourself; you can’t utter the words. When you pray, “Get me out of this,” the Holy Spirit prays, “Keep him in it!”

FEDERALISM PRINCIPLE

Isaiah

43:27 Thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against me.

43:28 Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches.

This penalty is applied under the federalism principle. Federalism is the principle in which the corporate penalty applies to everybody including the little people down at the bottom. If a pastor of a church does not tell his people the hard things, the church is going to be receiving a penalty, a corporate penalty.

The requirements for discipleship start with self-denial, and that is very difficult. If we omit this requirement in our sermons, do you know who that omission is going to hurt the worst? The little children will suffer the most because they will never learn what is required of them. They will suffer even though it wasn’t their fault; they were never told. But they’ve got to pay the price for not having a holy mother and daddy.

The children may have a churchy mother and daddy. And a churchy mother and daddy won’t raise up a child to be the warrior that he needs to be. And that omission produces the highest kind of penalty for a Christian because the victim will go through eternity without the rewards that God was planning on his earning.

There is a lot of responsibility in headship, and it says here, “Your first father sinned, and your teachers. . . .” You see these

are the leaders over the corporate bodies. “Your teachers have transgressed against me, therefore, I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel [the corporate body] to reproaches (Vv. 27-28).” That is the corporate penalty for the failures of its leaders. When he gives Israel to reproaches, it is not just this guy and this guy and that guy over there that pay the penalty. It is corporate Israel, all of its citizens, that pays. When God gives America to reproaches, I and my children and my grandchildren and you and your children are going to pay the penalty even though we and the children may be innocent.

Terry: Corporate penalties require individual payment?

V: Yes. It would be nice indeed, if just the ruling heads paid for their evil, and all of us down at the bottom didn’t have to pay, but when America goes wrong, all the citizens pay. When the church goes wrong, all of the members pay, and when the family goes wrong, all of the members pay. History is littered with great suffering by the citizens of countries ruled by evil tyrants.

Billy: Is that why when Isaiah encountered God, he said, “Woe is me for I have unclean lips, and I am among people with unclean lips because the people were unclean?” He was effectively unclean by being a member of the corporate body.

V: No, only the youngest children were like that. Isaiah was actually unclean himself. His uncleanness contributed to the uncleanness of the corporate body.

However, all of the individuals in the nation will participate in the penalty for the corporate body even though some may or may not be an unclean individual. If the corporate body is unclean, everybody pays.

However, the getting well of the corporate body has to be individual by individual until the group that sets the corporate path is clean.

That is why the Lord calls for the individual who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the corporate body. We are in charge of our own hearing, each one of us.

Corporate uncleanness results in a penalty to every part of the body, but corporate

cleanness results in a blessing for every part of the body as well. However, corporate cleanness does not result in cleanness for every part, and neither does corporate uncleanness result in uncleanness for every part.

Chapter Questions

1. What is it that Isaiah says will endure forever?
2. What are the benefits of redemption?
3. What is the two-fold duty?
4. What is the federalism principle.

Lesson 10

APOSTASY OF GOD'S PEOPLE**THE NINE CHARACTERISTICS
OF APOSTASY**

(Isaiah 48)

1. God's people swear by God, neither in truth nor in righteousness (V. 1).
2. They are obstinate, stiff-necked, and hard-headed (V. 4).
3. They will not witness (V. 6).
4. They see without knowing (V. 6).
5. They hear without hearing (Vv. 6 & 7).
6. Their ears are closed (V. 8).
7. They are treacherous (V. 8).
8. They are transgressors from the womb (V. 8).
9. The cure is to obey God (Vv. 17 and 18).

Isaiah

48:1 Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, [but] not in truth, nor in righteousness.

48:2 For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; The LORD of hosts [is] his name.

48:3 I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did [them] suddenly, and they came to pass.

48:4 Because I knew that thou [art] obstinate, and thy neck [is] an iron sinew, and thy brow brass;

48:5 I have even from the beginning declared [it] to thee; before it came to pass I shewed [it] thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them.

48:6 Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare [it]? I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden

things, and thou didst not know them.

48:7 They are created now, and not from the beginning; even before the day when thou heardest them not; lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them.

48:8 Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time [that] thine ear was not opened: for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb.

48:9 For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off.

48:10 Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.

48:11 For mine own sake, [even] for mine own sake, will I do [it]: for how should [my name] be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.

Isaiah

48:17 Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I [am] the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way [that] thou shouldest go.

48:18 O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea:

48:19 Thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof; his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me.

Isaiah

48:22 [There is] no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.

Class, can any of these characteristics be applied to you or your people? I see the lack of witnessing everywhere. I see the obstinacy of refusing to witness while at the same time a self-esteem that we are clean and holy as the

perfect bride of Christ. We are so comfortable in our apostasy that we can neither see nor hear about our need of repentance.

THE SERVANT SONGS

Now, we’re going to analyze the four servant songs as they relate to the following items in column 1 of Chart 10.1.1: Relationship with God, Gift of the Spirit, Purpose of the Gift, Ministry Style, and Mission. The remaining columns will be for the individual songs. So, for Servant Song #1 (Is. 42:1-4), we are going to identify the description for each item in column 1. We’ll do that for each one of the Songs. So we’ll come up with five answers for each servant song.

SERVANT SONGS ANALYSES

	Servant Song #1 Is. 42:1-4	Servant Song #2 Is. 49:1-6	Servant Song #3 Is. 50:4-9	Servant Song #4 Is. 52:13—53:12
Relation with God				
Gift of the Spirit				
Purpose of the Gift				
Ministry Style				
Mission				

Chart 10.1.1

Servant Song #1

Isaiah 42:1-4.

42:1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, [in whom] my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

42:2 He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

42:3 A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

42:4 He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

Okay, you have complete freedom to go back and re-do this analysis, but for now, I want to give you what I’ve got. You preachers can probably get four sermons out of your own analysis.

The Servant’s relationship with God is as a delight (refer to chart 10.1.2). Remember we saw that word in the baptismal formula. For the Gift of the Spirit, I put “Upon Him” (V. 1). On the Purpose of the Gift is “Judgment of the Gentiles” (Vv. 2 and 3). Now we come down to Mission, and that is “To Bring Judgment in the Earth” (V.4).

And then, if you would like to add a 6th row of cells that I don’t have a title for, put “To Restore Sight and Set Free” (V. 7). I couldn’t resist reaching down to verse 7 and fetching those words. Okay, we are now ready to go to the second song in Chapter 49:1-6.

	Servant Song #1 Is. 42:1-4
Relation with God	Delight, Verse 1
Gift of the Spirit	Upon Him, Verse 1
Purpose of the Gift	Judgment of the Gentiles, Verse 1
Ministry Style	Passive, Patient, Gentle (no self defense), Verses 2 & 3
Mission	To bring judgment in the Earth, Verse 4

Chart 10.1.2

Servant Song #2

Isaiah 49:1-6

49:1 Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.

49:2 And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me;

49:3 And said unto me, Thou [art] my

servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.

49:4 Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: [yet] surely my judgment [is] with the LORD, and my work with my God.

49:5 And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb [to be] his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength.

49:6 And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

Okay for Chart 10.1.3, the Relationship with God is “From the Womb by Name” (V. 1). The Gift of the Spirit is “His Mouth Is a Sharp Sword” (V. 2). The Purpose of the Gift is to “Glorify God” (V. 3). His Ministry Style is to “Labor in Vain” (V. 4). His Mission is to “Restore Jacob and Israel, to Bring a Light to the Gentiles and Salvation to Earth” (V.6).

The idea of laboring in vain (V. 4) speaks to Jesus’ being despised, mocked, rejected, and falsely declared guilty and executed on the cross. If you look at his ministry through the human eye, you would declare His labor a failure. But when you see what God says, you will see that His success is of the highest order.

The example here for us is not to despair even though you can’t see the results with your eye. You are to continue trusting that God will bring the results that He wants through your obedience. Even though you don’t see the results, you are not to stop. That is why the Lord went the whole way. Yet it is said here that the faults and the temptation are going to be on him who is laboring in vain. Jesus trusted God, and that is what we are supposed to do also.

	Servant Song #2 Is. 49:1-6
Relation with God	Called from the Womb by Name, Verse 1
Gift of the Spirit	His Mouth is a Sharp Sword, verse 2
Purpose of the Gift	To Glorify God, Verse 3
Ministry Style	Labors in Vain, Verse 4
Mission	Restore Jacob and Israel, to Bring a Light to the Gentiles, and to Bring Salvation to Earth, Verse 6

Chart 10.1.3

Servant Song #3 (Isaiah 50:4-9)

Isaiah

50:4 The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to [him that is] weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.

50:5 The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.

50:6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

50:7 For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

50:8 [He is] near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who [is] mine adversary? let him come near to me.

50:9 Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who [is] he [that] shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.

The relationship with God is that He is helped by God (V. 7) in the first cell of chart

10.1.4. The gift of the Spirit is that He is given knowledge, a tongue, and an open ear (Vv. 4-5). The purpose of the Gift is to speak a word (V. 4). His Ministry Style is to be obedient while persecuted (Vv. 6-7). His Mission is to contend with the enemy (Vv. 8-9).

	Servant Song #3 Is. 50:4-9
Relation with God	He is Helped by God, Verse 7
Gift of the Spirit	He is Given Knowledge, a Tongue, and an Open Ear, Verses 4 & 5
Purpose of the Gift	To Speak a Word, Verse 4
Ministry Style	To be Obedient while Persecuted Verses 6 & 7
Mission	To contend with the enemy, Verses 8 & 9

Chart 10.1.4

Chart 10.1.4, for the third of the Servant Songs, forms a more optimistic picture of the suffering servant. He is a person Who has wisdom, has the ability to speak, has the ability to hear, and He has a word to speak. His mission is to fight against the enemy in order to speak His Word. There is power in this Servant because God is helping Him to contend with the enemy.

This image of war is a different aspect, for our Lord. As our Master-Savior, He is contending with the enemy. We take this same model in our ministries, and then Who gives you wisdom? Who gives you the learnedness, Who gives you the ability to speak? The Lord does these things for you just as the Father did for Him. You are going to be enabled by the Lord to walk through all manner of resistance and suffering while contending with the enemy?

Jesus is our example; and what He did and how He is described in these Suffering Servant songs describes every Christian minister. Jesus was the Servant being described, but now you are the servant. Who is your Lord? Jesus! What are you going to do? The same thing that He did, the *Missio Dei*, i.e. “I came to seek and to save that which is lost.”¹ That is your mission, my mission, every Christian’s mission.

You are going to be the light to the Gentiles; you are going to contend with the enemy; you are going to speak the Word and bring judgment. All of these same things in these grid columns here are describing you *now*. When you preach, don’t just preach about the Lord and stop there. You preach about the Lord and then preach application to and for the church because there is a huge job to be done. If you don’t bring that mandate across, if you have cut that sermon short so that it is just a description of the Lord, you will have brought an idleness problem into the church. You are omitting the issue of sanctification which disarms the church. They have got to be armed and ready to go to battle. If you don’t do this, they are going to lose the fight by forfeiture, and apostasy will result. Then the characteristics of apostasy will apply to the church. Sadly, I think that they already apply. Class, we need some strong preaching and teaching, and it is up to you guys to get hold of this and take it out there to the people in the churches.

Suffering Servant Song #4 (Isaiah 52:13-Isaiah 53:12)

Isaiah
 52:13 Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.
 52:14 As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:
 52:15 So shall he sprinkle many nations;

¹ Luke 19:10

the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for [that] which had not been told them shall they see; and [that] which they had not heard shall they consider.

53:1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

53:2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, [there is] no beauty that we should desire him.

53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were [our] faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

53:5 But he [was] wounded for our transgressions, [he was] bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace [was] upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

53:8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

53:9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither [was any] deceit in his mouth.

53:10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put [him] to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see [his] seed, he shall prolong [his] days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

53:11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, [and] shall be satisfied: by his

knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

53:12 Therefore will I divide him [a portion] with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Jesus' relationship with God is Exalted and Growing (V. 13). His gift of the Spirit is the absence of comeliness (V. 2). No comeliness may be hard for some people to understand as a gift. But this is a gift. God determined to give Him no comeliness so that He would not win people based on something superficial. Now this gift of no comeliness is shared by several of you sitting in the back of the class (much laughter all around).

Larry: Notice how that contrasts with the anointing of Saul.

V: Yeah. Our King Jesus makes a good contrast with king Saul.

Larry: Upside down *kenosis* too.

V: Yes, that is a good contrast: King Saul was a ruling king, but King Jesus was a Suffering Servant.

The Purpose of the Gift is to avoid physical desire based on His physical appearance (V. 2).

His ministry style is a long one. I want you to write down the word suffer in the chart, but I want to delineate under that several things here that I think is worthy of noting. but for the test, you can just put the word suffer.

Composition of Suffering (Isaiah 53:1-10)

- a. Despised
- b. Rejected
- c. Sorrows
- d. Not esteemed
- e. Smitten of God

- f. Oppressed
- g. Afflicted

His mission is to be an offering for sin to justify many (V. 11).

	Sin to Justify Many, Verse 11
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Chart 10.1.5

Analyze the Songs Horizontally

We have filled in the grid vertically, by analyzing song-by-song. Now, can you see any kind of progression or correlation as you go across the rows? Take the whole row, and look at it all the way across. Is there anything in there that would be conducive to sermons using this horizontal analysis?

Larry: In His relationship with God, I see that He goes from being delightful to called to ministry, then helped by God, and finally He is exalted.

V: Okay! That is very good.

	Servant Song #4 Is. 52:13—53:12
Relation with God	Exalted and Growing, Verse 13
Gift of the Spirit	No Comeliness, Verse 2
Purpose of the Gift	No Physical Desire, Verse 2
Ministry Style	Suffer, Verses 3 through 10
Mission	To Be an Offering for

SERVANT SONGS ANALYSES

	Servant Song #1 Is. 42:1-4	Servant Song #2, Is. 49:1-6	Servant Song #3, Is. 50:4-9	Servant Song #4, Is. 52:13–53:12
Relationship with God	Delight, Verse 1	Called from the Womb by Name, Verse 1	He is Helped by God, Verse 7	Exalted and Growing, Verse 13
Gift of the Spirit	Upon Him, Verse 1	His Mouth is a Sharp Sword, verse 2	He is Given Knowledge, a Tongue, and an Open Ear, Verses 4 & 5	No Comeliness, Verse 2
Purpose of the Gift	Judgment of the Gentiles, Verse 1	To Glorify God, Verse 3	To Speak a Word, Verse 4	No Physical Desire, Verse 2
Ministry Style	Passive, Patient, Gentle (no self defense), Vs 2 & 3	To Labor in Vain, Verse 4	To be Obedient while Persecuted Verses 6 & 7	Suffer, Verses 3 through 10
Mission	To bring judgment in the Earth, Verse 4	To Restore Jacob and Israel, to Bring a Light to the Gentiles, and to Bring Salvation to Earth, Verse 6	To contend with the enemy, Verses 8 & 9	To Be an Offering for Sin to Justify Many, Verse 11

Chart 10.1.6

Trouble: I like the gift of the Spirit; it seems to me like the Spirit of the Lord came upon Him, anointed him to speak, and as he spoke, His Words cut like a sword and divided. He had knowledge and a tongue to share with His Words. He had ears to hear what the Spirit says to the churches. And all reception was of His Words rather than any physical attraction.

Trouble cont'd: They heard the words that He spoke because He had the knowledge to speak in such a way that it opened the ears of the audience. Even for people that don't normally hear, He had the knowledge to speak in a way that opened their ears, and He did all that presentation in a way that did not attract people via worldly values, such as comeliness.

Larry: That Word was sharper than a two-edged sword, and it cut through those ears that were closed up.

Helen: On the Purpose of the Gift, the first one is judgment of Gentiles, and the second is Glorify God. I think that by judging the Gentiles, they are then enabled to glorify God. And then through the glorification of God, they will then be able to speak the words.

Dean: God's mission was for Christ to come to the cross. He was patient with the Children of Israel all the way to the point of the cross. He labored in vain to the disobedient people. They reject and persecute Him to the point of crucifying Him.

Terry: I think that we should take His ministry style just the way it is written as our ministry model.

Steve: Looking at this grid, it actually reads like a book.

Possible Identities of the Servant in the Songs

1. Unequivocally identified with Israel.

2. If the servant is interpreted collectively then there is an anomaly, i.e. out of order, a non-sequential. The anomaly is of a nation effecting its own renewal.
3. This anomaly is the most serious obstacle to the collective view.
4. The tension between individual and collective interpretations is inherent in the text.
5. The fulfillment can only be Christ.

The Suffering Servant is Christ, and Christ alone. And so this grid describes Him; it doesn't describe you and me. But when you take the tension which is in the text which means then that there must be a collective application somehow, then it is Christ in the grid, but His ministry descriptions in the cells now apply to you and me in our ministries.

I leave it to you to grade yourself by using this grid. Take each item in the left column and then find where you fit, if at all, in each horizontal row.

THREE HARKENS AND THREE AWAKENS (Isaiah 51)

Isaiah

51:1 Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock [whence] ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit [whence] ye are digged.

51:2 Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah [that] bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.

Isaiah

51:4 Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people.

51:5 My righteousness [is] near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust.

51:6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.

51:7 Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart [is] my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.

51:8 For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.

51:9 Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. [Art] thou not it that hath cut Rahab, [and] wounded the dragon?

51:10 [Art] thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?

51:11 Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy [shall be] upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; [and] sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

51:12 I, [even] I, [am] he that comforteth you: who [art] thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man [that] shall die, and of the son of man [which] shall be made [as] grass;

51:13 And forgettest the LORD thy maker,

Isaiah

51:17 Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, [and] wrung [them] out.

Isaiah

51:21 Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine:

We have already talked about being drunk without wine.

Isaiah

51:22 Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God [that] pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, [even] the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again:

51:23 But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over.

52:1 Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.

Isaiah

52:3 For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.

I am going to list the three hearkens and the three awakens. I want these back on the test.

Hearkens

1. Look unto Abraham for the example of God's blessing.
2. Lift your eyes to heaven; it will vanish, but salvation is eternal.

What God is trying to show you now is that this temporal world, what you can see with your eyes, is not to be trusted. Hear what he is saying. Don't trust your eyes. Trust his salvation, which is eternal

3. Fear not the reproach of men, they will be eaten by worms.

Awakens

1. The arm of the Lord will fight for God's people.
2. God's fury will come upon Jerusalem's oppressors.
3. Zion will be redeemed without money.

I see six levels of Christianity in these hearkens and awakens. The lowest levels are the levels dealing with "awaken." The highest levels are the levels dealing with "hearken." And so we have a call by God to awaken. When you are awakened the first time, you are awakened to redemption and that would be Zion. Zion is the name for God's possession of the elect holy land and people. Zion is being called to awaken after being redeemed without money.

Instead of by money, the purchase of Zion is via the Abrahamic Covenant plus the Mosaic Covenant plus the New Covenant. In Old Testament terms, this is God's election of the man Jesus via promise of the Abrahamic Covenant of a birthright to all men of Abraham's offspring, then the broken Mosaic Covenant of obedience by all of Zion, and finally the New Testament Covenant of restoring and completing the broken Mosaic Covenant via the Substitutional Atonement by the Perfect Sacrifice of God's Only Begotten Son Jesus. In our New Testament terms, the spiritual Zion then begins with Jesus and expands to all Who are in Him. This redemption forms the justification part of salvation in Jesus, the basic beginning of your salvation experience.

The next level up is a smaller area, Jerusalem. But once you begin to move into Jerusalem, to identify with God where the Temple is, there is going to be an oppression, and when the oppression hits, God is gonna unload fury on the oppressors. But, I want you to see something here because many of us don't even get up to the hearkens. Most of us are still at awaken #1, in Zion, saved, but we just exist in our salvation. See, there is no oppression on some of us. We're just cooling through life. We go to work, and everybody loves us at work. We come home, and they love us there. And we just go here and there, and everybody loves us like it is party time.

You have heard: "I am not going to offend anybody by witnessing to them. I am not going to hand out any tracts and get in trouble and all like that. I don't have the gift of evangelism. I go to Sunday school, Church, and all the church functions." Those Christians are just in Zion.

The Christians who are camped out in this comfortable spot are apostates. The characteristics of apostasy listed at the beginning of this chapter describe those of us who are camped out in Zion. We are neglecting the basic requirements of obedience. Our Christianity is compartmentalized as churchianity plus a nominal morality. We don't believe in the *kenosis* of sanctification. Instead we live as kings in charge of our own lives. We call ourselves disciples because we got baptized, attend church, and tithe. We are convinced that God is swooning over our self-defined discipleship as we seek fame and fortune.

But when I start identifying with the Lord, and all that I do connects with my worship by talking with the Lord and about the Lord, and I identify as one of the Lord's servants, hey, I am at the second level. That bottom awaken down there is where all baby Christians and the various levels of apostates reside. But I am one notch above the babies at this point of being a witness in Jerusalem at the second awaken. The Lord is storing up fury for those who mess with His witnesses. Some of us are witnesses, but most of us haven't gotten that high yet.

Now, we go up a little further to the third awaken, i.e. at the warfare level. This level is where the arm of the Lord is fighting through and for you. That kind of fighting, you see, is worldly warfare that you must go through in all of the tribulations that accompany your sanctification. He does not cast your enemies aside here, there, and everywhere so that you can walk along unbothered. No this level of warrior-Christian walks like Jesus did. When he ministers, they spit on him, and they

despise him, and they mock him. He perseveres even though it looks like ministry for nothing because all reject him.

We still haven't gotten to the hearkens yet. But now at the top awaken, we warriors are spit upon and ridiculed and mocked, but the strength of the Lord's Arm sustains you through it. This is how you bring glory to the Lord: you stand in there, and you don't run away from it.

The lowest hearken is "Fear not the reproach of men because they are going to be eaten." This level appears to me to be an attitudinal mind kind of thing. At this level, it looks like they might be about to eat us. It is a fearsome fight that we are struggling with at this level. The reproach of men comes upon us. We have no homeland, we are pilgrims, nobody claims us, we are alone, but we are not to fear man. They kill the body, but we remember that it is God alone Who can kill the body and cast the soul into hell.

Now we are in with the big boys; we are up at the lowest hearken level now. We can hear the Lord's intimate whispers. At this level, our hearing has been opened up, and we not only hear the Lord's commands, but we also obey them. This level of warrior has ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

Let's just see if we can ease on up a little bit further to next to the top level. Can I ease forward in my growth now above the first hearken? The answer is yes **if** I will lift my eyes to heaven and look at the things there.

Everything you can see down here is temporal, but salvation is eternal. We must focus our attention on heaven in order to walk this second-hearken level of Christianity in which heaven becomes real in our consciousness. When that eternal salvation becomes your life's focus, more than an intellectual knowledge and more than a possession, when it is assimilated into every part of your very being,

there is nothing you can't do. Nothing! You can walk through hell if that eternal salvation takes over your mind soul and spirit. We are not talking about an intellectual knowledge where you can write it down on a test, preach your sermons, while living in your upside down *kenotic* piety.

Anyone at this heaven-now point in his warrior level can now go all the way up to the highest level of hearkens. Look at Abraham for the example of God's highest hearken. Abraham was called out of his land. He was given a Word from God, a Promise from God that if he would leave his homeland and go to a land that God had for him, He would make him into a great nation. Abraham's trust was further tested with his growing old before having the promised son. Then he was tested to the maximum when his only son was requested by God to be sacrificed back to God. Abraham stumbled a bit on the aging test of faith, but he passed the test with flying colors on the maximum test. This shows that Abraham had reached the top hearken level.

Now I want you to see the pilgrimage of Abraham. He leaves his land, leaves his comforts, and goes to a place that he has not heard of. There Abraham will grow old without any physical fulfillment of the promised blessing.

He waits and waits, and Sarah waits there with him for a son. And there is then the doubts which lead to the consideration: maybe God meant for us to have a son through another woman. So he tried to take matters into his own hands and fulfill the promise himself.

God rejected Abraham's and Sarah's carnal effort. Finally, he gets a son in his old age, and then God said, "I want you to sacrifice that son to Me." And Abraham staggers under that test. He doesn't see any blessing anywhere in this hearken. How is this going to work? It seems like everything is going backwards. It seems that instead of blessings, Abraham is losing all that he has; it

seems like he is going down hill. He is going to come to his death not having seen the fulfillment of the Promise.

Not only is Abraham not going to see the fulfillment of the Promise, but also the patriotics that follow him are not going to see it either. They are going to have to take it by faith knowing that the fulfillment of the Promise must be on the other side of death.

At this highest hearken, you actually begin to live a sacrificial, crucified life where you are going down in the *kenosis* without any physical and material blessings on this side of death. However, you can look across the *kenotic* chasm to the other side of death (the middle hearken of looking into heaven) and see the Promise of Blessing with the eyes of faith, i.e. hope.

Class, Can you look to Abraham? The highest "hearken" is to look to Abraham as your example. You don't go for what you can see. But you go on the Promises of God. You can't hold them in your hand. There is nothing you can throw a rope around to give you some stability. There is nothing but the Word of God. That is the highest level achievable. The only way to get to Abraham's level is via climbing up the rungs of the ladder of awakens and hearkens.

I think, that most of us never get into the hearkens. As a matter of fact, I think most of us never get into the Jerusalem level of awakens. We spend our lives rejoicing over getting into Zion. We consider ourselves to be big deals because we are in the first awaken.

Class, there are the awakens, and then there are the hearkens. We are supposed to go all the way, folks, all the way! That is what God is calling us to do.

I want you to be able to list those awakens and hearkens. Then, I want you to examine your life: where are you? Are you in the awakens? Are you in the hearkens? If you are in the awakens, where are you in the awakens. Are you in Zion or Jerusalem or in the wars accompanied by the strong arm. If you are in the hearkens, where are you in the hearkens. The challenge is to go all the way to Abraham.

God started His delineation of Christianity's levels at the top because He expects every Christian to get to the top. He didn't start down at the bottom with the first awaken when He was talking to His people. He started at the top. If He were talking to the lost, then He would have started at the bottom.

What we are reading here in this Bible about the hearkens and awakens is to God's people; He is talking to us. He says, "Hearken, look unto Abraham." That is His call on everybody in here. At the top is where He starts. Then He works His way down all the way to the awakens looking for His people: "Are My ministers down there with the rest of My people? Yep, there they are in Jerusalem just preaching justification to my people who are already in Zion. I wish they would preach sanctification to the justified so that the Zion group could at least get out of apostasy by getting the cure of obedience, i.e. the only way into Jerusalem, the next step up."

Chapter Questions

1. What are the characteristics of apostasy?
2. Complete the following chart.

	Servant Song #1 Is. 42:1-4	Servant Song #2, Is. 49:1-6	Servant Song #3, Is. 50:4-9	Servant Song #4, Is. 52:13–53:12
Relationship with God				
Gift of the Spirit				
Purpose of the Gift				
Ministry Style				
Mission				

3. What suggestions have been made for the identity of the servant in the Songs?
4. List the three hearkens and the three awakens.

Chapter 11

ISRAEL'S ERROR IS THE CHURCH'S ERROR

Let's start with Isaiah 50. What we are going to do tonight is a whole lot different than anything we've done before. What I would like to do is analyze the Suffering Servant by comparing each issue for the individual vs. corporate bodies. So, please make an analytical chart with three columns in it, and make it the whole width of your page. The column titles shall be individual, Israel, and church (see Chart 11.1.1). Under the individual (God's Suffering Servant), the first thing I would like for you to put in there is "He trusts implicitly in God (Isaiah 50:7-9).

Now under Israel, write this: Faint hearted and in need of admonishment to trust in God. There is a whole bunch of references; when we come to Israel, we've got more references than we can write down, but let me just give you several (Isaiah 40:27-31, 41:4-10 & 14-16, 42:18-19).

Now under the church, I put that we trust in God for our justification and glorification. We arrive at the church evaluations from personal observations. For the most part, the doctrine of salvation has been reduced to getting saved, living the good life, and going to heaven.

INDIVIDUAL	ISRAEL	CHURCH
He trusts implicitly in God. Isaiah 50:7-19	Fainthearted and in need of admonishment to trust in God. Isaiah 40:27-31; 41:4-10, 14-16; 42:18-19	Trusts in God for justification and glorification.

Chart 11.1.1

All right now we are going to go down to the next row. Under the individual write down, "Innocent but suffering for the sin of others" (Isaiah 50:5-6). Now under "Israel put down punished for their own sin" (Isaiah 40:1-2, 42:22-25, 43:22-28, 47:6, 50:1, 54:4-8).

punishment. Jesus has won the victory over sin, and we get to bask in His victory. God's grace covers our past, present, and future sins. In our cell of the table, I put that we take sins too lightly because our past, present, and future sins have all been paid for by Jesus.

I think that the church takes sin too lightly. Since Jesus has paid it all, we are exempt from

Individual	Israel	CHURCH
He trusts implicitly in God. Isaiah 50:7-19.	Fainthearted and in need of admonishment to trust in God. Isaiah 40:27-31; 41:8-10, 14-16; 42:18-19	Trusts in God for justification and glorification.
Innocent but suffering for the sin of others. Isaiah 50:5-6; 53:4-6 & 9 & 11-12.	Punished for their own sin. Isaiah 40:1-2; 42:22-25; 43:22-28; 47:6; 50:1; 54:4-8.	Takes sins too lightly because our past, present, and future sins have all been paid for by Jesus.

Chart 11.1.2

All right now we move to the next row. Under the individual, put down "suffers patiently" (Isaiah 53:7). Under Israel, put down "Complains of discomfort" (Isaiah 40:27, 49:14, 50:1-2).

For the church, I think that suffering is no longer acceptable. We only accept pampering by Jesus. Instead of doing what He wants us to do, we demand that He do what we want Him to do. We associate any kind of suffering with sin instead of righteous sacrifice. We think that if

you are close to Jesus, then you will have smooth sailing. If you are righteous, then your bed will be of roses. We can tell who the

sinners are in the church by their troubles. I put in the cell for the church that it demands comfort and rejects sacrificial living.

Individual	Israel	CHURCH
He trusts implicitly in God. Isaiah 50:7-19.	Fainthearted and in need of admonishment to trust in God. Isaiah 40:27-31; 40:4-10, 14-16; 42:18-19	Trusts in God for justification and glorification.
Innocent but suffering for the sin of others. Isaiah 50:5-6; 53:4-6, 9, 11-12.	Punished for their own sin. Isaiah 40:1-2; 42:22-25; 43:22-28; 47:6; 50:1; 54:4-8.	Takes sins too lightly because our past, present, and future sins have all been paid for by Jesus.
Suffers patiently. Isaiah 53:7.	Complains of discomfort. Isaiah 40:27; 49:14; 50:1-2.	Demands comfort and rejects sacrificial living.

Chart 11.1.3

Now for the last row, except for the conclusion, we have “He ministers to others” (Isaiah 49:5-6). And then under Israel, put down “It receives ministry,” and for your references put (The whole Holy Bible).

For the church I think that we too are just like Israel, we are introverted too. We focus on what we are going to get from our Christianity, not on what we are going to give.

Individual	Israel	CHURCH
He trusts implicitly in God. Isaiah 50:7-19.	Fainthearted and in need of admonishment to trust in God. Isaiah 40:27-31; 40:4-10, 14-16; 42:18-19	Trusts in God for justification and glorification.
Innocent but suffering for the sins of others. Isaiah 50:5-6; 53:4-6, 9, 11-12.	Punished for sin. Isaiah 40:1-2; 42:22-25; 43:22-28; 47:6; 50:1; 54:4-8.	Takes sins too lightly because our past, present, and future sins have all been paid for by Jesus.
Suffers patiently. Isaiah 53:7.	Complains of discomfort. Isaiah 40:27; 49:14; 50:1-2.	Demands comfort and rejects sacrificial living.
He ministers to others. Isaiah 49: 5-6.	Receives ministry. The whole Holy Bible.	Focuses on receiving ministry, not giving ministry.

Chart 11.1.4

I am not expecting you to memorize this analytical chart. The analysis is for addressing the issue of judgment for not taking Isaiah seriously. There is going to be some judgment about this. And I want us to take a look at it before we land in the judgment.

trust in God paved the way for His acceptance of His path. Whatever He was going to encounter as He walked His path, He trusted God to provide what was necessary to accomplish it. He trusted in God; He put His life in God’s Hands—no matter what may come.

Okay, now I want you to look at this conclusion that I am fixing to draw here from this little analysis. Now the Lord Jesus is the individual in the first column. He did not think it strange to be assigned the *Missio Dei*. His

We trust God in everything except sanctification. We want to allow God to take care of our past and future, but we will handle all of our present decisions.

In the Lord's second cell, He is described as suffering patiently for the sins of others. The word picture that I would like for you to have for patience is the idea of holding a giant burden up on your shoulders (see Chart 11.2).

You continue to stand under the burden by balancing it on your shoulders. It is easy to hold it up there for a little while. But when you stand under it and keep

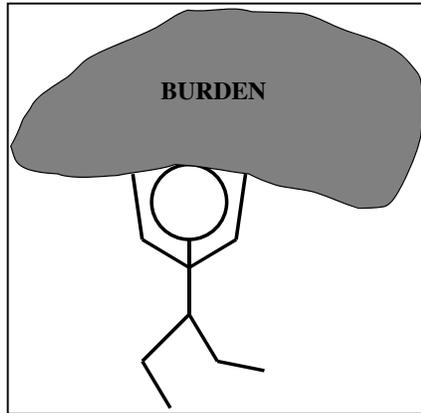


Chart 11.2

on standing under it, it gets heavier and heavier. No matter where you go it is on you, pressing you down, and you begin quivering with exhaustion. After a while your muscles begin to tremble, and your legs begin to feel like they are turning into rubber, and you want to be able to go and do the things that everybody else is doing, but you can't because you are under this burden.

Class, the Christian definition of patience is to stand under and remain under the burden of the *Missio Dei*, i.e. God's assigned path for our sanctification walks. If you drop the burden, then you are free to be like everybody else, and leave the burden behind. God's burden is the *Missio Dei*, i.e. to seek and save the lost (Lk. 19:10), and the Lord carried that burden all of His Life, all the way to His Own crucifixion. He suffered patiently by staying under the burden; He did not drop it in order to get some relief. In His prayer in the garden, as He was looking at the climax to His suffering, He said: "Not my will, but Thine." He stayed under the burden! That is what you and I are supposed to do. So, the church's cell ought to be that we must suffer patiently under the burden!

And then in the Lord's bottom cell, He ministers to others. Jesus came to minister. His

vectors were outward; He was not self-centered. He didn't come to receive ministry; He didn't come to receive praise; His vectors were outward. He came to bless others by offering His gift of salvation. Then He began to teach and train those who were accepting of Him and who were trustworthy of His limited time. He worked to raise up faithful people to carry forward the *Mission Dei*. His whole focus was on the world, the lost world. He came as a light invading the darkness, and the darkness rejected Him, but He didn't pout and run away. He stayed with it, and he called twelve to train to take over His Mission. And those twelve were to train others to take over His mission. The baton in this relay race is NOW in your hands. We are running on the same track carrying the same baton that Jesus carried as He ran. The Mission of God is in your hands. And so as a result of that, we are supposed to anticipate our mission to be similar to His Mission.

Israel is God's chosen people to receive the Lord's Message and take it to the lost world. But Israel failed its mission because it is fainthearted and in need of admonishment to trust in God. They don't even trust in God, which is the first requirement of partnership.

God redeemed Israel from Egypt by using all of the miraculous plagues. He then delivered them through the Red Sea by parting the waters and giving them a strip of dry land on which to walk through the sea. Then He changed the bitter waters to sweet waters to prevent the nation's dying of thirst in the wilderness. Class, God showed His power and His trustworthiness, and yet here is Israel needing to be admonished to even trust in God.

The Lord was innocent and punished for the sins of others in order to initiate the New Covenant of Grace. I don't know whether you guys have experienced being unjustly accused and punished for someone else's error. It is difficult, if not almost impossible, to take it patiently without defending yourself. Because Jesus did it, we must sacrifice our justice by willingly being subjected to the unfairness of the cost of discipleship.

However, Israel has continued in its refusal to trust God. Therefore, Israel will continue to undergo God's discipline.¹

When the Lord carried the burden and suffered patiently, Israel got rid of the burden. Under Deuteronomic Theology, the burden would mean that you are filled with sin and being cursed for it. If you are living free and easy and being blessed physically and materially, then you are considered to be righteous. Being blessed is normally considered the first sign of righteousness. Deuteronomic Theology will turn many well-intentioned disciples from their assigned paths.

Because Jesus had this giant burden of a lost world, He had no place to lay His head. He only had one cloak. He didn't even have a home. He didn't get to marry and have a family. He was despised and mocked and ridiculed, and He had no place that was accepting of Him. Israel was given that burden, and they tossed it down in their search for material blessings.

Class, that burdenless kind of thinking is what we are being bombarded with. It will cause you to get rid of the burden and be just like everybody else, and then call it righteousness and discipleship.

Trouble: I don't want to get off track but everywhere I go, people are praying for blessing, praying for a touch, and praying for this and wanting all manner of stuff to be received. I recognize and see that as not lining up with what Christ wants, but what I want. How can you ever break through that huge barrier? Here, we are supposed to be following Christ's model now of serving and giving blessings, but we want to be blessed instead.

¹ We must beware of discounting Israel's election because of their failure to step up to God's mission. God's election is without repentance even though He continues in His discipline of His chosen people. Therefore, God's promises of blessings and curses for those who bless or curse Israel are still in effect.

I don't know how we can get the church to see that.

Richard: A lot of times if you have a burden in your life, you know, a family member or something, and you deal with it for several months. Is it wrong to pray for God to take that burden from you?

V: It depends upon what "the burden" is. If it is a natural burden like an illness or some other natural kind of need, then we are supposed to ask for that relief. However, if it is some kind of obstacle or hurdle to your ministry, we are to pray for God to help us through it. Class, there is no such thing as easy ministry that has no sacrifice. Every one of you is going to encounter resistances to your ministries. You must go through them just like Jesus did. Our victories in ministry are to be by overcoming the obstacles, not by having the obstacles removed. We must stay under the burden, the *Missio Dei*, the Mission of God. Do not expect God to lift that burden off of you. Carrying that burden for the rest of your life is what sanctification is. However, your path in your sanctification is especially designed by God which takes into account your gifts, talents, and all of your natural assets, such as family, birthplace, health, strength of body, finances, education, etc.

Larry: The passage beginning in Hebrews 5:8 says that though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; And being made perfect—which means finished—He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him; Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec. Of Whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which [be] the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk [is] unskilful in

the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, [even] those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

V: Our time here on earth is our testing time; sanctification is your testing time. The Lord has tests in front of all of us, and those tests are going to be painful, they are going to be long lasting, they are going to be agonizing, and they can't be done apart from the help of God. But He means for you to go through the tests, not around the tests. And the tests have to do with strengthening you in character, building some bottom to you so that there is endurance in your life, and that you are going to begin to persevere and to go through the tests with victory. By doing so, you will build some faith muscle. Rather than run from the fights, you are going to walk through them. You must be willing to say, "Not my will, Lord, but thine," the same way Jesus did. Now the tests that we have are rinky-dink tests compared to His, but we are even shying away from the rinky-dink tests.

We are getting out from under the burden of the *Missio Dei* so that we can be free like all the rest of the church members. It is natural to want that freedom from the burden. But I want you to do combat in your mind and adopt the style of the suffering servant because ***if the mission of God is going to be done, it is going to be done as a suffering servant just like Jesus did it!*** And if we demand our desire to be pampered so that we don't have to suffer, then what is the difference between the church and the nation of Israel? If Israel failed, and we are just like Israel, then Israel's failure is passed on to us. Why can't we learn the lessons from their mistakes?

Judah learned the lesson about idolatry from Israel, her sister but did not cast out idolatry. Judah, instead, refined their idolatry to temple worship. Israel was divorced by

God because of their blatant Baal worship, but Judah was declared to be even more treacherous because their idolatry was a subtle part of Judaism's regular worship and therefore presumably acceptable to God.

Well, if Judah saw that God divorced Israel by allowing them to go out of existence, then they should have been very aware of God's impatience with idolatry. But no, Judah baptized their idolatry of temple worship which they thought surely would be respectable to God. Since it was His Own Temple, surely He would respect their supreme allegiance to it!!!! The Judeans were going to pretend like they loved Him. They were going to replace their assigned burden, the *Missio Dei*, with something more to their own liking, like doing all their assigned sacrifices and rituals in the Temple. They emphasized justification and glorification, but left out sanctification. They figured that God would be pleased if their love and esteem for His Temple was even more excessive than He required. Judah didn't learn anything about idolatry except not to worship an image of a creature. Is that all that we have learned too?

Now at the beginning of the church age, the Christians did the same thing because like Judah, the Christians had seen idolatry but not truly learned about the extent of it. Apostasy came into the church in the form of idolatry. The Roman Catholics of the dark ages idolized the Church and Mary. God's Word told them of the failures of Israel and Judah, but they thought that surely God would respect their worship of the Church, His Own mother Mary, the saints, and rituals. They bundled their idolatry into Catholic garb, a close copy of Judah's treachery.

The Reformation gave birth to the evangelical church, which expressly broke away from the Catholic's idolatry of Mary, the saints, the Church and its sacramentalism. The new non-Catholic Christians thought that what they had to do was go back to the Bible

that declared that you got your salvation directly from God alone.

Now, here we are thinking that if we get our justification right, then God would respect us. Judah watched Israel and ended up doing the same thing by disguising it in their religion. The Roman Church observed Judah and Israel, but they are still doing the same thing. Now I am here to tell you that we are making a mistake similar to Judah's. We have replaced our sanctification by expanding our

justification to cover any need for any self denial, sacrifice, and *kenotic* suffering in personal ministries. We are assuming that God is a respecter of our persons once we are justified, especially if we are focusing on our emphasis on church worship, rituals, and offerings.

For the Jews, a suffering Messiah was a contradiction of terms, and a stumbling block (1 Cor. 1:23, Mt. 16: 21- 27).

Individual	Israel	Church
He trusts implicitly in God. Isaiah 50:7-9	Faint hearted and in need of admonishment to trust in God Isaiah 40:27-31; 41:8-10 and 14-16; 42:18-19.	Trusts in God for justification and glorification.
Innocent but suffering for the sin of others. Isaiah 50:5-6; 53:4-6, 9, 11-12.	Punished for its own sin Isaiah 40:1-2; 42:22-25; 43:22-28; 47:6; 50:1; 54:4-8	Takes sins too lightly because our past, present, and future sins have all been paid for by Jesus.
Suffers patiently. Isaiah 53:7;	Complains of discomfort. Isaiah 40:27; 49:4; 50:1-2	Demands comfort, and rejects sacrificial living.
He ministers to others. Isaiah 49:5-6	Expects ministry from God in times of trouble. The Holy Bible	Focuses on receiving ministry because of worship and offerings as a substitute for sanctification.
A suffering Messiah. The sum total of the Isaiah passages above.	For the Jews a suffering Messiah was a contradiction of terms and a stumbling block. 1 Corinthians 1:23; Matthew 16:21-27	Focuses on a victorious Messiah Who will continue ministering to the justified saints who, in turn, focus on receiving ministry, not doing ministries.

Chart 11.1

1 Corinthians
1:23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.

The Messiah's being crucified does not make sense to Israel and Judah. Their idea was of a conquering Messiah who would forcefully change the whole world, and give them the blessings that they so rightly deserve as God's Elect. Their Messiah is just going to take away all of the problems that they have and fix it all up so that they could kick back

and enjoy life. That is a power-based not a sacrifice-based theology.

Larry: Everybody is praying for blessings; the church is praying for blessings of stuff and for everything to get fixed. The church today has the same mindset that all the apostles had when they were jockeying for a throne near Jesus in His soon to be victorious kingdom. Their mindset was that the victorious Messiah was going to fix everything physically and materially.

V: That's right. The disciples didn't understand it either because they had the Jewish expectations of a conquering Messiah. The disciples' expectations were of a Messiah who would lead Israel into independence and prosperity via power, not sacrifice.

Matthew

16:21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

16:22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

16:23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

16:24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any [man] will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

16:25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

16:26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

16:27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

When we get down to the last cell of Israel, there is only one conclusion that can be drawn by Israel if the above cells are taken into consideration. They came to it logically and rationally. But, you see, all of this stuff in the above cells for Israel is wrong. If the input to your analysis is wrong, and if you have a right mental process, then you must come to a wrong conclusion. And the only way you can escape a wrong conclusion in that situation is to have a mental lapse and accidentally come into a right conclusion.

All right, this third column is the church. This is where I stop, and this is where you start because you've got to answer for the church. You are the church.

Brandon: Under Deuteronomic Theology, the person who has it easy and is being blessed is righteous. However, it is actually just the opposite. Anyone who is righteously following Christ is going to suffer persecution.

V: That's right! And Jesus warns us not to be surprised. So, why are we so surprised that we doggedly reject His message about sacrifice and sufferings in the *kenosis*?

Brandon: I've got a tract called "Why No Revival?" It has a picture of the Apostle Paul in jail where the Roman soldiers were persecuting him. A Christian outside the jail asks Paul: "What kind of apostle are you? If you'd just claim it, brother, you could be out here like me."

Helen: Well, I think first of all that the description under Israel applies to us, too. We are fainthearted and in need of admonishment to trust in God. If things go "right," God is great, and we think that we are on the right path. But when things start going wrong, we don't know what to do with it.

Mr. Gulley: The first concern of the church is financial security. We gear everything toward that. When it comes to witnessing, we are like Israel's first cell, i.e. fainthearted and in need of admonishment. We don't truly trust in God or even understand God. We've gotten out of God's river, and made our own comfortable tributary.

Terry: Think about deception. Peter was right there rubbing elbows with Him, and he was deceived. Loss for the Christian is actually gain.

V: Right! Israel is coming to the only possible conclusion that it can come to under their deception.

Terry: In the Exodus class, Pharaoh was offering up alternatives to Israel that were very deceptive.

V: Yes, there was one that I would have fallen for.

Billy: I really don't think that most Christians really trust God until they're up against the worst possible stuff that they never thought would happen to them.

Larry: Israel did good as long as they had a good king. We have the King of kings. Why aren't we doing good? We can't control Christ, but we can control how much we allow Him to work through us and in us.

Sam: Jesus is not the sweet Santa Claus king that we wanted or expected under our Deuteronomic Theology.

V: These cells add up to a conclusion. What is the conclusion of the church? that the suffering Messiah was Jesus. Jesus achieved victory through His sacrifice and has given it to us. Now, we are the victorious group who are free to just kick back. See, what did Israel want? They wanted a political Messiah to conquer all the ills so they could kick back and rest in their glory. What does the church want? They want a suffering Messiah who achieved the ultimate victory via that suffering. In His suffering, He paid the whole price and cured all the ills, so that we can kick back. Can you see how Israel's failures and our failures are all coming down to the same thing? Now if Israel came to that conclusion that there can't be a suffering Messiah, then they reject Christ. Now, when we come down to a suffering Messiah who pays it all, we get our justification right, but we reject the *kenotic* sacrifices of our sanctification required by Christ's Lordship.

Helen: We put the church in place of Jesus by saying that the church is His body. This Truth however is interpreted not as His body that is to continue His sacrificial mis-

sion, but as His body that is to continue in His Lordship over the world.

V: As part of the Lord's Body, we think to become lords of our own lives.

Philippians

2:20 For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.

2:21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

This is our indictment. Paul was in a situation where he needed to send a messenger to another church, and he said, "I have no other man, only Timothy, because my other people around here are seeking their own." They are kicked back because the suffering Messiah has paid it all, and now it's their kingdom, and they're kings, and they're priests, and they are the unspotted bride.

Oh, you can't get any better than being unspotted. We don't need to do anything further because we already have it all. All the sacrifices have been made, and we are the ruling victors enjoying the spoils of victory. Whenever we see a problem, we just point it out to King Jesus who will fix it so that we can keep on enjoying life. Folks, this is heresy! In effect, we are rejecting the Lordship of Jesus.

Israel rejected the suffering Lord because they were looking for a political Messiah, but we reject Jesus' Lordship because we were looking for a suffering servant who paid it all for us with His death and conquered all for us via His Resurrection. Our only duty is to worship Him and praise Him and enjoy the great life that He has purchased for us. Wrong, we are to deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow Him! Serving Jesus, not enjoying life in self-indulgence, is our duty.

Fran: I remember from my youth the preachers preaching more of carrying your cross and denying yourself. Nowadays you never hear that any more. It seems like we believe in Jesus as the suffering servant, but

we don't want to accept our own suffering service.

V: Right, we want to participate in Jesus' victory, but we separate ourselves from Him when it comes to suffering. To be in Jesus is to be not only in His victory over sin and death but also in His ongoing suffering ministry to the world for the lost people to also gain victory over sin and death.

Fran: Our basking in the Lord's victory is why we find ourselves saying, "Why, Lord? Why are we suffering, or why are You not fixing this problem?" It just makes sense that if we are supposed to be following Him, and going in the same way that He did, on the same path with the same mind, then we will not always be getting our way like spoiled children.

David: When you add up the boxes, Fran is right. We are so focused on the grace of God that we have forgotten sanctification's ongoing responsibilities. Jesus expects us to deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow Him. We don't want to be disciples because we want to be the pampered bride instead. I'm getting married June 26, and when I come for my bride, she had better be ready. (Much loud laughter).

Jerry: And that brings us to the second box. We are not alone. The world is also being punished for our neglect.

Terry: Jesus didn't die on the cross so that we can just pray and play.

V: We have turned the *kenosis* upside down. We have thrown out the doctrine of sanctification. We have redefined discipleship. We have reduced the doctrine of salvation to just the two elements—justification and glorification. Everything in between those two doctrines is our religious lives composed of prayer, worship, tithing, and church meetings. The rest of our time is dedicated to ourselves in work, play, and family.

Travis: Are we being punished now for our sins, or are we lining ourselves up for punishment down the road?

V: Is our ease a blessing, or is it punishment?

Ben: Maybe it is a period of time in which God is giving us to repent.

Larry: Our Deuteronomic Theology would say that ease indicates that we have no need to repent.

Raymond: When these trials are going on, and everything is falling in on you, it is because being in Christ puts you in the middle of the war.

V: How many of you have come to me for counsel, and I have said, "Your struggles and problems are a sign of God's blessing you." You want to get out from under the burden of struggle, but staying under it until God lifts it is pressing on to God's highest calling. Class, your struggle is a sign of God's blessing you because it is the only path to rewards in heaven.

Trouble: The choice is between receiving ease versus receiving blessings.

V: The time of ease is our highest test. Will you pick up your cross in the time of ease, or will you indulge yourself with all the other "blessed" folks enjoying their ease?

Outlaw: The burdened church is throwing the burden off to get its ease. The church at ease is refusing to take up the burden.

Helen: The church is serving itself. It is inward reaching instead of outward reaching.

V: Yes, it is easy to say about the church, but *we* are the church.

Jackie: Can we connect this discussion with the discussion we had several weeks ago about that passage that said, "Rise up ye women who are at ease . . . ?"

V: Yes, that is a good connection. The women are not encouraging their husbands to do costly ministry outside of the church and home.

Could it be that the eyes of the man are being directed to material blessings and ease because of trying to please the woman? This connects to the primary focus of life described by Paul's statement about staying unmarried because if you marry you will have to, instead of attending to the things of God, attend to the things of your wife and vice versa?

Is our life focus fixed on ourselves expecting ease and material blessings as the pampered bride? Are we expecting the Groom Jesus to focus on pleasing us?

Mr. Gulley: The church is not doing its duty because we don't have enough people that know what God's Word tells them to do or called them to do?

V: Okay, think with me. The majority of Baptists know a lot of the Bible, but they know it the same way that Israel knew the Old Testament. Israel knew the Scripture well, but they came out of that knowledge with the wrong conclusions. Now here we know both the Old Testament and the New Testament, and we're coming out with the wrong conclusions too because we read blessing in every verse. We demand blessings; we're not even going to read it if it doesn't promise another blessing. Grace, blessing, salvation, the spotless bride, everything is made perfect for us, because that is what we are demanding.

Israel demanded a political Messiah; they didn't get one. So they rejected the light that came into the darkness. God came to Israel, and they said that they did not want Him as their king. They wanted a king like every other nation had who would fix all the wrongs. And so that political messiah who would work from a platform of power is a conclusion that they come to based on their misreading their Scriptures.

We, on the other hand, reject a messiah who demands that we labor and sacrifice in service to Him. We want a Santa Claus for our messiah who will work from a platform of love and grace and will give us everything that our hearts should ever desire.

Israel knew their Scriptures, and we know our Scriptures. Just like Israel did before us, we are still coming out wrong because we have brought presuppositions to our Scriptures, and we can't see the truth of them any more. Just think of the *kenosis*; you don't hear this preached anywhere. And when some of my students preach it, they get branded, thrown out of the churches, never invited back, and all of that because it is too literal, and there is nothing in it about us being lifted up and having a life of ease. All this business about going to the death and being humble, and being obedient, and then the exaltation coming after death has nothing to do with our presupposed conclusions about blessings and rest/ease. No, we want our exaltation now. And once you get in that mindset, every passage in the Bible is interpreted within that structure. You can memorize and have in your heart the Words of God, but it will go through your mind before it comes out of your mouth, and it is twisted, and changed to something that God never said.

Israel came up with the wrong conclusions, and it cost them dearly. Let me tell you whom it is costing now. It is costing you and the church and the country and the world dearly. Because the church has rejected God's message as it is in the Bible and replaced it with the self-centered pattern that Satan has created in our fallen natures, the world is going to hell, our country is nearing total destruction, our churches are impotent, and your lives are a mess.

This country is on a slide like I've never seen before, while the church is basking in the rapt attention of its idolizing members. The

church is benign and impotent in helping the country, much less its own members. And it is only radicals like yourselves that are causing any thinking to occur in the political arena, and they are going to get rid of you, and if you don't know that, go to the book of Revelation and see the countless numbers of Christians that are going to be executed by Antichrist. It's going to happen. But what we need is for Christians to stand up now and push through their persecutions in their self-denying carrying of their crosses and obeying the Lord's ministry assignments.

It is going to be up to you to take this message into your own heart, take Isaiah seriously, come out with the right conclusion because you are not pampering yourself, you are not looking for ministry to yourself, but your vectors are outward. You are here to die to self; you are here to bless others in the world, which is your whole reason for being. And if you can adopt that style, then Jesus can use you. But if you are in the "bless me, Lord, as I bask in Your victory. I need for You to solve all my problems," then you will continue to wander in the wilderness. You will need to be fed and clothed by the Lord until your carcass falls in death. If that is our mindsets, then He cannot use us.

Who is He going to send? Who was Paul going to send on that errand of journeying to Philippi to check up on the church there? He said, "I have no one to send except Timothy. I am sending my only trustworthy minister because all the rest of the people have their mind set on their own affairs.

Let me tell you, class, it is going to be rough for us if after we study and get this much understanding from Isaiah, and then we leave and we adopt that same pattern of "Bless me, Lord. Give me a great life." If that happens, then you will have disregarded Isaiah's suffering servant motif. You will have disregarded the *kenosis* of Philippians 2, and all of the passages that have to do with

the mission of God being passed on to His servants.

If we don't take the mission, who is going to take it? I guess we can continue to pray and give the Lord a daily list of chores to accomplish for us. In essence, we will be saying that the Lord has only paid it all for our sin. Now, we expect Him to pay an ongoing price for our physical lives of ease. We will be essentially asking Him to keep on paying and striving to win our earthly victories for us while we enjoy the fruits of those victories. No, we are to take the baton from our Lord and pay our dues of suffering and win our victories during our lap on the track of life. That is what sanctification is all about!

Class, Jesus has done His part, and He has now turned over the rest of God's Mission (the *Missio Dei*) to you His church. He gathered 12 around, taught and trained them. He developed a team of partners by investing His Life in those 12. He meant for those 12 to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, teaching them to do everything that he had taught the team to do. This is called multiplication.

So the 12 (after Paul was added) started going out into all the world, teaching everybody. They passed the commission on to the next generation. And the next generation did the same thing, and the next generation did the same thing. Class, it is our turn; we're on the stage of history with the spotlight on us.

What are we going to do? Get a rocking chair and pray, "Oh, God, bless me, help me, take care of me." Or are we going to train up a group in which we invest our lives. We must continue to penetrate the world with the Gospel and be faithful with the commission that God has given to us. If you are Jesus' partner, you know the mission and accept your responsibility in it. You are going to do your ministry even if it kills you.

However, if you are not a partner, then you are just a dependent; just kick on back with all the “normal” Christians. If you choose to be “normal,” then please don’t teach others. Just keep your mouth shut because when you teach, you will be impeding the Mission of God in this world.

Dan: Some of our Sunday school teachers teach like Israel was teaching. Does that connect with the passage that says, “Beware of false teachers”?²

V: Yes, it connects. And now it is up to you to hold the false teaching at bay. Our lack of teaching the doctrine of sanctification with its *kenotic* discipleship is really hurting the church.

It is not the general church membership’s fault. For many years, the teachers and the preachers have been pandering to itching ears rather than the costs of discipleship. Now, the church has the same mindset as Israel did. Israel could not but come to the conclusion that they came to. Well folks, the church also can’t come but to the conclusion from whatever went into the mix. It is up to us to change the mix that goes into the conclusions and then God will give them a new conclusion.

² 2 Peter 2:1

Chapter Questions

1. If the *Missio Dei* is going to be carried forward by us in our sanctification, why have we failed?
2. Israel knew the Scriptures. So, why did Israel fail to understand its mission in the world?
3. The Church knows the Old and New Testaments. So why is the Church failing in its mission in the world?

Lesson 12

ISRAEL'S SANCTIFICATION WAS LACKING

Let's open up our Bibles to **Isaiah 56** to see . . .

GOD'S REQUIREMENTS FOR ISRAEL*Judgment*

Isaiah

56:1 Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation [is] near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.

56:2 Blessed [is] the man [that] doeth this, and the son of man [that] layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.

God commands Israel to keep judgment. He expects them who have the Scriptures to be able to discern both good and evil. So in their judgment, they are going to be able to look and see what are the evil things and depart from them. By doing justice, they are going to be able to discern the good and run to it.

The viability of the salvation that was near to come could be retained after death by believing the promise of God on the basis of the provisions of the Abrahamic Covenant. The salvation, however, would not be completed, however, until after Jesus came and completed the requirements of the Mosaic Covenant. With the establishment of the New Covenant, people need only to believe God for a completed salvation.

Those who believe God will have the ability to discern in their judgment to do the good and reject the evil. Basically, God is showing both Israel and us how to activate our holiness.

Holiness

Verse 2 is a statement about keeping the Sabbath from polluting it, and keeping the hand from doing any evil. This is a restatement of verse 1 in different terms in order to enhance our understanding.

In the Old Testament, the Sabbath was one day of absolute holiness. Not only were the people of God holy in their persons, but their actions were to be set aside for God's sole use for the first day of the week. This was God's way of training His people for how to conduct their lives for the rest of the week. It was also for teaching His New Testament people how to conduct their lives everyday.

After Jesus completed His work of salvation, our holiness of personhood is Jesus. We who are in Jesus are holy people who are supposed to be surrendering ourselves to His holiness in our lives by allowing God to use us just like He used Jesus. In other words, our holiness of behavior should be added to our holiness of persons. This holiness of behavior is the sanctification part of salvation, and it is only achieved via surrender to obeying the Lord minute by minute. Blessed is the man who keeps his holiness in Jesus, i.e. denies himself, takes up his cross, and follows Jesus.

Blessed are the Lord's disciples who are drawing near to the Lord in their holy lives of sanctification. The Sabbath Day is the Jew's time of complete dedication to the Lord on the first day of the week. For us New Testament saints, everyday is the Sabbath. By keeping the Sabbath holy everyday, we are drawing near unto the Lord via sanctification.

In sanctification, God is concerned with actions. Our actions must go beyond mere ceremony. Sanctification is more than justification and glorification. A ceremony is good,

but it is not the whole. If our Christianity is one of ceremony without the walk, without the judgment, without the doing of justice, and without restraining our hands from evil, then we wouldn't have any holiness in our works, i.e. our works would not be sanctified. Our lives would be compartmentalized into religious ceremony and vanity.

The Jews were adept at ceremony. Today guess who is adept at ceremony. We specialize in worship ceremonies in church. But we have need of dispensing with vanity by using our judgment to practice justice in our holy walks of sanctification between ceremonies.

No Respect of Personhood

Verses 3 through 8 deal with the outcasts, i.e. strangers and eunuchs.

Isaiah

56:3 Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I [am] a dry tree.

56:4 For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose [the things] that please me, and take hold of my covenant;

56:5 Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.

God is not a respecter of persons. He does not have respect unto the Jew nor does He have disrespect unto the stranger and the eunuch. If the stranger and the eunuch take hold of the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants and join themselves to God, God is going to bless them in the same way as He is going to bless the Jews.

This inclusion of strangers is a blessing based on where the heart is in faith, not in status or personhood. God respects actions of good works. God does not respect person or status.

For example, God will extend His Old Testament blessings to the person of no reputation, who is humble and joins himself to God. It does not matter what his status is—his economic status, his cultural status, his background, his race or heritage, whatever it might be. None of that has any effect on God. God looks upon the heart of faith, as demonstrated via the persons' quest for holiness. So, the eunuch and the stranger may be outcasts of Israel, but they are incasts of God, if their heart draws near to God in belief that is buttressed by holy actions.

Isaiah

56:6 Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant;

56:7 Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices [shall be] accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.

56:8 The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather [others] to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.

There are some churches now that are exclusive; if you are not of a certain class, you are excluded. If you are not of a certain color, you are excluded. If you are not of a certain language, you are excluded. God's house shall be called a house of prayer for all people.

Billy: Let a wino stumble into your church, and see what happens.

V: Yep. Better yet, let the Lord come in, and see what happens. "Behold I stand at the door and knock."¹

Okay, we've looked at: (1) the command from God for us to have judgment, (2) to be

¹ Revelation 3:20.

holy, and (3) not to be a respecter of personhood. Now we are going to look at (4) those who are supposed to help the people to have judgment.

Israel's Watchmen

Isaiah

56:9 All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, [yea], all ye beasts in the forest.

56:10 His watchmen [are] blind: they are all ignorant, they [are] all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.

56:11 Yea, [they are] greedy dogs [which] can never have enough, and they [are] shepherds [that] cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter.

56:12 Come ye, [say they], I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, [and] much more abundant.

Why Do the Beasts Come to Devour?

Because the Watchmen Are:

1. Blind.
2. Ignorant.
3. Dumb dogs that cannot bark.
4. Sleeping.
5. Lying down.
6. Loving to slumber.
7. Greedy dogs who can never have enough.
8. Shepherds that cannot understand.
9. Doing his/her own thing.
10. Motivated by self-gain.
11. Drunkards.
12. Anticipating a better tomorrow.

Turn to Jeremiah chapter 23. God sees bad watchmen as a common problem among His people. God has watchmen who are assigned to watch and to protect the flock, the camp, the city, and the nation. They are supposed to be alert, on top of the wall, looking for approaching enemies. While the rest of the people are inside dealing with life issues, e.g. eating, sleeping, working, ministering,

and worshiping, where is the watchman? He's outside in the cold, shivering in the night, all alone, staying alert and looking for the enemy. He has to bring a word to the people that the people don't want to hear, e.g. words like: Get ready! They are coming! We must learn how to fight. We've got to build our defenses. We've got to get ourselves healthy and ready to fight. We've got to inventory our weapons, get them in place, and learn how to use them.

People don't want to hear those messages. What do they want to hear? Let's eat, drink, and be merry because the good times are here. We are God's chosen people, and nothing but blessings are coming our way. We can just sit around and do all the fun stuff, and then when we die, it is even going to be more fun. That is the message they want to hear. If that watchman will just prophesy that message of justification and glorification, then the people will stroke him and say, "Oh, you are a good prophet." But if the prophet refuses to say that, then he is going to be castigated by the people—the very people he is giving his life for. They don't appreciate his message of sanctification, a message of get ready, get tough, suck it up, and let's go fight the good fight.

This is the story through the centuries, and it is even more so today. The people demand lives of luxury and self-indulgence. Truth has been distorted to the extent that Existentialism has entered our churches to displace solid objective truth. Theology has become what you want it to be. That pesky doctrine of sanctification was the first doctrine to be jettisoned, and the definition of a disciple was soon afterward modified to include every church member. The truth from a Scripture for this prophet is different from the truth for that prophet. Let's see what God says about the prophets through Jeremiah.

Jeremiah

23:9 Mine heart within me is broken

because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness.

23:10 For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force [is] not right.

23:11 For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD.

23:12 Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery [ways] in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, [even] the year of their visitation, saith the LORD.

23:13 And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err.

23:14 I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.

23:15 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets; Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall: for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land.

23:16 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, [and] not out of the mouth of the LORD.

23:17 They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.

23:18 For who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard [it]?

23:19 Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD

is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked.

23:20 The anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.

23:21 I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.

23:22 But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.

23:23 [Am] I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off?

23:24 Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.

23:25 I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed.

23:26 How long shall [this] be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, [they are] prophets of the deceit of their own heart;

23:27 Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal.

23:28 The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What [is] the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD.

23:29 [Is] not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer [that] breaketh the rock in pieces?

23:30 Therefore, behold, I [am] against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour.

23:31 Behold, I [am] against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith.

23:32 Behold, I [am] against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to

err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.

23:33 And when this people, or the prophet, or a priest, shall ask thee, saying, What [is] the burden of the LORD? thou shalt then say unto them, What burden? I will even forsake you, saith the LORD.

23:34 And [as for] the prophet, and the priest, and the people, that shall say, The burden of the LORD, I will even punish that man and his house.

There was and still is a serious problem with God's watchmen. Jeremiah is describing the watchmen in Judah as the cause of a coming disaster. Before Jeremiah, Isaiah was also a prophet of God bringing those hard words that call for change of life. But Israel and Judah were content with focusing on the easy life, easy worship, easy religion, and the assumption that God is a magic wand for them to use to get their own way.

Life without sanctification becomes a life in which you seek to manipulate God and use His Power because you think that you know more than He does about how to use your life with His Power. The prophets are saying all manner of "peace," and "ease," and "be cool," and "relax." Now, turn back to verse 12.

Isaiah

56:12 Come ye, [say they], I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, [and] much more abundant.

Tomorrow is going to be better than today? This is the agenda of Progressivism. According to the book of Revelation, our best was at the beginning with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Progressives think that the world is going to get better and better and better. You hear that today from our politicians, God's ordained watchmen² during the era of human government.

² Romans 13.

In Isaiah's situation, the people are commanded to use judgment. But only the outcasts of Israel are using judgment, and when they do, God considers their performance to be worthy holiness. God respects actions, not persons. The watchmen, however, are the ones who have the assignment of giving judgment to the people. There is where everything falls apart. You almost have to leave Judah to get judgment. The watchmen are lying around asleep. They can't even make a noise that is as good as a barking dog. Even a dog can warn you that danger is coming.

When we advance a century or so later, and we look at Jeremiah, we find the same problem. The collapses of both Israel and Judah are because of the lack of leadership. The people are just staggering around like their drunken watchmen. Their holiness is in personhood only. They have no holiness in their works as shown by their purposeless lives of vanity. And when you come to Judah a century or so later, Jeremiah accuses the prophets of being terrible leaders who are leading the nation into destruction.

When we look back at the history of Israel and Judah, Israel is seen as the bad nation because they were divorced by God and ceased to exist for their idolatrous practice of Baalism. Judah is seen as the better of the two because they stayed married to God and continued to exist. So, preliminary judgment would be that Judah is the better nation. But that judgment would be wrong. Judah was more treacherous in their idolatry because they esteemed the Temple of God as a talisman with divine properties. Israel's watchmen were greedy, lazy, drunkards, but Judah's watchmen were far worse. God even said, "Don't even listen to them; I am against them (Jer. 23:32)."

How can you tell if prophecy is right or wrong? I am not talking about foretelling of future events; I am talking about the forth telling of God's warnings. It says clearly here

in Jeremiah that the false prophets preach of peace, peace, peace. It says clearly over here in Isaiah that the wicked prophets say, "Oh, we have peace, we are getting better, everything is good."³ What does the true prophet say? We must humble ourselves, pray, seek God's Face, and turn from our wicked ways (2 Chronicles 7:14). He is always calling for change:

Jeremiah

23:22 But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.

The good prophet stands in the counsel of God. But he is faced with the people who are worshipping God but also being content with themselves. They are doing their temple rituals correctly, and they are the chosen people of God, so why would God send tragedies like what the good prophet warns about? This thinking by the people is a trap into which the drunken watchmen are leading them. The people are led into the trap by the false prophets who are really looking for self-gain, looking to their own way, and enjoying life. All of them think that a child of the living God shouldn't endure any God-sent problems or go without anything. A child of God is a child of the King. Because of his faithful attendance to all the requirements of worship and sacrificial rituals, he thinks that he should bask in peace and prosperity provided by an approving God.

Terry: Are you saying we are deceived?

V: Yes, I am.

Terry: Where does that deception start?

V: It starts in the leadership. The prophetic deception is coming from the leadership, and it is disseminating throughout the

³ Peace, prosperity, victory, and ease are always wrongly seen as God's approval of His people by false prophets.

entire Church and nation. But there are a few leaders, watchmen like the outcasts Isaiah and Jeremiah, who are willing to risk the people's ire by issuing God's warnings.

God is going to use the word "we" in here in a little bit, and we will take a look at that. But in anticipation of that use of the first person pronoun, please note that there are some true watchmen in every age, and I hope you are those watchmen, because there is a great responsibility on you. If you are not willing to be those watchmen, then you shouldn't be in this class because you are coming under judgment and accountability for your lack. There will be great penalty for knowing the truth and not doing it.

In Philippians when Paul needed to send a minister to Philippi, he said in an apologetic statement, "I have no one to send but Timothy. For all of the others are interested in their own affairs."⁴ That problem is the same with these watchmen in Israel and Judah, but thank God there was Timothy, and thank God there is you.

All right, let's go on now to **Isaiah 57**. There are two different kinds of men on display here, and we are going to see what kind of good things happen to them.

Two Kinds of Watchmen

Righteous and Merciful Watchmen

Isaiah

57:1 The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth [it] to heart: and merciful men [are] taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil [to come].

57:2 He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, [each one] walking [in] his uprightness.

Okay, the righteous man and the merciful man are separated from evil by two things: one is death. The righteous man will die to

⁴ Philippians 2:19 and onward.

evil. His life is lived in sacrifice for the people. Who else is going to die to evil? Is it the people of self-interest, governed by self-interest? Are they going to die? Not by a long shot. They are just going to keep on indulging themselves. But it is the righteous man and the merciful man who are going to die. So death is the first thing that is going to separate the righteous man from evil.

The second thing that separates them from evil is their righteous and upright living. But when you start walking right, that will draw attention to you, it is going to get you in trouble. The next thing you know you will be separated from evil the first way. Isaiah and Jeremiah were separated from evil in different ways. Isaiah was separated via death when he got sawed in half. Jeremiah was separated via continued upright living. John the Baptist got his head whacked off and put on a silver platter. God chooses how His prophets are going to be separated from evil, but until he chooses separation by death, the prophet chooses separation by righteous living.

Okay, we just looked at the righteous man and the merciful man, let's look at the next set of men.

Evil Watchmen

Isaiah

57:3 But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore.

Just as God's talk about drunkenness is analogical speaking, the metaphor is not about tipping a bottle, and that kind of thing. His talk about the sons of the sorceress, adulterers, and whores is metaphorically talking about those who have been brought into a false religion under another god, i.e. idolatry. Sons of harlots are those who have been born into a twisted version of God's true religion, and the harlot would be the one who brings in the twisted falseness. Also a harlot is not necessarily female.

When I read the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit just reaches out and grabs me in a warning grip because the spiritual intoxication (drunkenness) and the harlot (church) are being addressed. But if I read it and think that the drunkenness was from literal wine, then I am free. I escape because I am neither an alcoholic nor a son of a sorceress or whore.

Isaiah

57:4 Against whom do ye sport yourselves? against whom make ye a wide mouth, [and] draw out the tongue? [are] ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood,

57:5 Enflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks?

57:6 Among the smooth [stones] of the stream [is] thy portion; they, they [are] thy lot: even to them hast thou poured a drink offering, thou hast offered a meat offering. Should I receive comfort in these?

57:7 Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set thy bed: even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice.

57:8 Behind the doors also and the posts hast thou set up thy remembrance: for thou hast discovered [thyself to another] than me, and art gone up; thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee [a covenant] with them; thou lovedst their bed where thou sawest [it].

57:9 And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase [thyself even] unto hell.

57:10 Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; [yet] saidst thou not, There is no hope: thou hast found the life of thine hand; therefore thou wast not grieved.

57:11 And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied, and hast not remembered me, nor laid [it] to thy heart? have not I held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not?

57:12 I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee.

Sons of Adulterers and Whores Described

(Isaiah 57)

1. Sticking their tongue out at God (V. 4).
2. Engaging in idolatry (V. 5).
3. Sacrificing children (V. 5).
4. Making drink and meat offerings (V. 6 – 8).
5. Playing up to the king (V. 9).
6. Propagating idolatry over the earth (V. 9).
7. Debasing themselves (V. 9).
8. Holding to continuous hope and not grieved by their designing of their own lives (V. 10).
9. Having no fear of God (V. 11).

For the evil watchmen, God will declare their righteousness and their works (V. 12). This is a works judgment. Every one of us is going to go through a works judgment. It doesn't matter who you are; God is no respecter of persons. He is going to examine and test your works. Are they or are they not holy? It doesn't matter whether you are saved or lost. The lost are going to have their works judged as well, and the same standards that are measured against the lost are going to be measured against us. God only has one set of standards—His standards. Both the lost and the saved are going to have their works judged under God's standards.

Also know that our personhoods are judged in a separate judgment. At every person's death his personhood will be judged. The angels will take the souls of the lost persons who do not bear God's mark of ownership (Jesus in his heart) to hell. They will take the souls of those bearing Jesus in their hearts, the justified, to heaven.

We saved people have been justified and have received God's mark of ownership. We are His slaves. Our personhoods were judged by God's standards while we were yet alive, and we were found guilty. But God offered us forgiveness for our guilt if we believed and

confessed that Jesus Christ bore our sins to the cross and was raised as Lord. Thus our personhoods have been proclaimed by God to be just as righteous as the Lord Jesus Himself, just as upright and clean and pure. Our righteousness is an imputed righteousness given to each of us by God as a gift that was purchased by the death, burial, and resurrection of His only begotten and perfectly righteous Son Jesus Christ. That is the Gospel message, i.e. you are given the righteousness of Jesus. However, that imputed righteousness is only for your personhood. Your works are a separate matter. They are going to be judged as well.

All persons will be judged in relationship to Jesus. If they don't have Christ in their hearts, their personhoods are judged guilty, unrighteous, and wicked. Based on their personhoods, they are going to be headed for the eternal lake of fire. But their works are going to determine how much punishment is going to come upon them in that lake of fire.

For you who have Jesus in your hearts are seen by God as perfectly righteous. Your personhood's righteousness is the same righteousness of Jesus Christ. The seal of God in your heart, then, seals you as God's slave, and your eternal destination is heaven. But your rewards in heaven are going to be dependent upon what your works are as His slave.

One's heaven or hell destination is determined by his personhood, but the amount of joy and rewards or the amount of pain and suffering will be dependent upon his works. These are the two kinds of judgment that are going to come upon everybody. But here in Isaiah, God is talking to His people, Israel and us.

God is saying that He is going to declare the righteousness for all of you sons of harlots and drunks. But He also is going to look at your works. It doesn't matter who you are because God is not a respecter of persons, and He is going to judge everyone's works. So,

all you sons of harlots, drunkards, and idolaters in the church guess what. You are going to heaven, but you will have nothing there—no mansion, no crown, no clothes, and no assigned management responsibilities. God is going to declare your works before all of us. He is going to judge them in front of all of us. He is going to bring to light every thought, word, and deed. Nothing will escape God's scrutiny. So, we need to exhort one another to holiness if we are the prophets of God, His watchmen. Turn the people from their evil ways. Don't tickle their ears and tell them how good it is getting. Tell them, "You've only got a little bit of time to live. Get with it. Turn and redeem the time by plying your ministry before it is too late." That is our prophetic message. That is Isaiah's message. That is Jeremiah's message. That is Amos's message. All the prophets have the duty to proclaim that message. It is our message that we need to take out there to all peoples.

The first verse of **Isaiah 58** is to the prophets, and the second verse is to the people of God. He says to the prophets:

Isaiah

58:1 Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

So you can see right here that the prophets are not going to be welcome because you are going to be bringing this kind of message about the people's sins and transgressions. The prophets are to bring this message to those who . . .

Isaiah

58:2 . . . seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.

This sounds like some very super duper people here. They are turning to the Lord,

delighting to know God's ways, and doing righteousness. They are taking hold of God's ordinances of justice.

Class, these are the hardest ones to reach because they are practicing righteousness and seeking God's Face. People like this are not aware of their sins. They see no need of repentance. Does that sound like the present day church to you? Look at what they are doing . . .

WORTHLESS FASTING

Isaiah

58:3 Wherefore have we fasted, [say they], and thou seest not? [wherefore] have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.

58:4 Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as [ye do this] day, to make your voice to be heard on high.

58:5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? [is it] to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes [under him]? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?

58:6 [Is] not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

58:7 [Is it] not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

The people of God are described as a worshipping bunch that delights in approaching God. They are fasting and upholding righteousness by walking in the paths of righteousness. But, you see, those paths are self-designed and not what God defined and assigned to us in our service to Him. Instead, Israel's righteousness is a ceremonial right-

eousness. It is a righteousness of culture, lineage, and worship. Israel was removing themselves from the world, but they actually brought the ways of the world in there among them. And so here they are fasting and wondering why God doesn't hear their prayers. They are an upright people who are sacrificing in the Temple and asking why is God not listening to them. That is whom the prophet is sent to.

The prophet has a hard job. Do you have to go into a bunch like that? Yes! It is much easier to preach on the streets. It is easier to lead the people to the Lord who know that they are not righteous and have no hope to come out of the evil of their ways. But, man, when it comes to the people of God and their righteousness and their fastings and their ceremonies, how do you reach a people like that? Class, *that* is your job. Most pastors give up on the multiplication of sanctification and just focus on church growth via addition or any other means.

Our righteousness has to be God defined, not man defined. Our uprightness and our ceremony has to be God defined, not man defined. We are not to submit our neck to the yoke of ceremonies, traditions, or the expectations of men. If you are going to walk with God, you have to be free enough to be in yoke with Him. When you fast, it has to be God defined and God-centered. It cannot be man defined and doing without food for reward. It has to be dedicating self to God for His exclusive use.

The True Fast

God talks here about what He would like to see in the fast in verse 6: "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?" You watchmen must come out of "Institutionalism" yourselves before you can help your people out of it. What about your people's bread? Is it not to give it to the

hungry? to bring the poor into their houses and to clothe the naked man? and not to hide thyself from thine own flesh? God's defined fast is far more than ceremonial. It has an associated walk of sacrifice and righteousness attached to it, and it is defined by God.

Tom: I've written in my Bible that fasting is the willingness to set aside the appetite of the human body for a period of time to be set aside and spent exclusively with God.

V: Yes, it is turning away from human food for a time of feasting on the divine food of Scripture, prayer and meditation with God. Just skipping meals and doing whatever you want to is not a fast. That is a diet.

A fast is to bring your body into submission to your spirit, and submit your spirit to God. It has to do with God as the center, as the focal point. Anything short of that is just basically a diet, and not a fast.

The fast is not necessarily of a specified time or number of meals. It does not have to meet man's standards. A fast can be of one or more meals or days because it is how long God is setting aside for your spirit's communing with Him alone. That is the length of the fast. It is not the other way around.

We must shut off the world and all of its trappings to spend exclusively with the Lord. Just giving up food for a specified length of time is focusing on the self and your requirements. That is not a spiritual fast. The spiritual fast is the other way around. You purpose to bring your body under control and give your spirit to the Lord. Good communion will come out of that.

Isaiah talked about breaking the yoke and getting rid of the burdens. We must shed all slavery to other things, maybe to food, a person, a ceremony, or something else, especially Institutionalism.

Larry: I think you just answered my question because it was about breaking every

yoke, and I was going to ask if that had to do with church rules and traditions or with just the worship ceremonies.

V: Breaking the yoke of Institutionalism has to do with both. We are not to be submitted to those yokes. We are to be submitted to God, and that is the purpose of fasting—to focus on communion with Him and getting His redirection of our attention on His paths for our lives so that He will have *all authority* over our lives. You can have good intimate conversations with God if you have drawn near to Him. When you draw near to Him, He draws near to you, and you have the promise of His hearing when you draw near to Him as the real center of your life.

These guys in Israel are described as “afar off.” They speak and God doesn’t hear because they are thinking in terms of a man-made ceremonial kind of righteousness. They are so proud of their walks prescribed by Institutionalism: “Man, I wish everybody in God’s family could be as good as I am.” That pride must be excluded. Humility and fear of God are the only doorways to drawing close to God.

King David, when he fasted for his dying son, drew close to God by excluding all other concerns for his own business of life. He meant to get hold of the Lord’s garment and hang on for the Lord’s decision. When his son died, he got up, he refreshed himself, he cleansed himself, and his smile testified to a godly joy in his heart.

The people observing David’s actions said, “Why did you grieve when he was dying and rejoice when he actually died? That’s backwards.” Basically, David and Bathsheba’s grief was lived out in Nathan’s pronounced penalty on their stricken son. That grief was before the actual death. However, God’s actual choice was death. With the actual death, David realized that God’s choice was for the best. So, David turned

from grief to the joy of knowing that God always chooses the best.

This approach, you see, is a dedication of your spirit and then bringing your flesh and all of your desires and everything about yourself under submission to the Holy Spirit. It requires your not being yoked and under the control of all of your fleshly desires and natural concerns.

When we put specific requirements of when to fast, length of time, whether you can drink water, methods of prayer, locations for fasting, etc., pretty soon you must wonder whose expectations you are a slave to. When you have so many masters, how can you even pray to God, e.g. “Oh, God, I am going to give you, let’s see now, I’ve got five minutes for you.” Is God supposed to draw near to you and hear you because you are in the church and performing all the ceremonies and tithing? If we think like the Israelites thought, then we might assume that God is obligated to give us His rapt attention for the 5 minutes allotted to Him.

The Gains of the Effective Fast (Vv. 8-12)

Isaiah

58:8 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward.

1. Our light will shine forth.
2. Our health will spring forth speedily.
3. Our paths will straighten toward righteousness.
4. Our rereward is that the Lord is glorified, and we will share in that glory in eternity.

Our rewards will come from the rereward (rearward), i.e. *after* our actions. Rewards follow our works, not precede them.

Isaiah

58:9 Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I [am]. . . .

5. Our prayers are heard as He draws near.

Then verse 10 talks about the light again:

Isaiah

58:10 And [if] thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness [be] as the noonday:

So, as you subject your soul to hunger by satisfying the *kenosis*, your darkness will become like the noonday sun light.

Isaiah

58:11 And the LORD shall guide thee continually, . . .

6. God will guide us continually.

Larry: Do you think in verse 9 there, that putting forth the finger is referring to the speck in the brother's eye and the log out of your own eye?

V: It could include that, but I think that it means removing any recriminations from our approach to God as if our prayer is advising Him.

Verse 11 confirms to me the source of my excitement.

Isaiah

58:11 . . . and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

7. Our spirits fail not to overflow and become a source of refreshment for others.

Isaiah

58:12 And [they that shall be] of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, . . .

8. Your students will build upon your work that is true to the original work of God.

9. You will be known as the repairer of the breach.

Now, remember how we started off with the watchmen and how they were laying around drunk and sleeping and carrying on? This kind of breaking yokes and fasting is how the watchmen will be healed. We must do the same thing if we ever want to be called the repairer of the breach because, folks, there are many breaches in the walls today.

The next phrase in that same verse is what he is also called.

Isaiah

58:12 . . . the restorer of paths to dwell in.

10. You will also be called the restorer of paths.

The restorer of paths has a little bit of a different meaning from repairer of the breach. Repairer of the breach is a defense mechanism, but a restorer of the paths has more to do with a positive walking. The walking involves direction, the method, and the goal. All need restoration.

But if you are going to be walking on your path, you need to be defended because the enemy is going to be coming at you. And a lot of the attacks are going to come from the rear. And the glory of the Lord is your rereward. You've got the glory of the Lord at your back. Nothing is going to come through that. You have the armor of God to protect your front, but you are vulnerable from the sides. You need a wall to protect you on the outside side as you are walking and protecting yourself on the front and the inside.

You still need to know where you are going and how to get there. This is where the prophet has to come along and relay information from God about the path that you need to be walking on. God sends the prophet to keep you on path and to clarify God's destination for you.

Trouble: Those people on the wrong paths would be referring to those who would be hard to reach?

V: Yes, they would say they have no breach in the wall and that they are already on their paths because their lives are smooth, much smoother than the paths of the prophets.

Trouble: When they say that they have their paths, how do you know whether or not they do?

V: The true prophet knows whether or not it is sacrificial to God. The false path is a wide and smooth path.

Larry: Start preaching the truth to them, and they will rebel.

Billy: I always think I am doing all right, when I start a semester, but then we have to study (laughter from the class). And my studies tell me everything that is wrong. It really bothers me, and when you start telling us that we are all in need of repentance, I really didn't think I needed to repent. But I now need to **repent!**

V: Billy, it happens to me every course I teach because I learn something new every time I teach a course.

Billy: So, once we have achieved this kind of fasting, how close to being repentant are we?

V: Repenting is part of the fast. Learning what changes you need to make in repairing your wall and then restoring your path that God has chosen for you is the repentance part of the fast. The thing about holiness is that you have to turn from yourself which is impossible to achieve without divine help.

These are good people being addressed by Isaiah. They are God's people like us. They think that they are right on path, and we think that we are right on path.

Helen: Pillars of the community.

V: Yes, they are pillars because they don't know of their wrongness. They have been told the wrong thing, and their leaders don't understand how to bring them onto the

right paths, because the leaders can't find the right paths themselves. Their leaders are just like the people; they are the blind leading the blind. Nobody can see in the darkness. Their fasts are rituals. Their worship is ceremony. Their sacrifices are good and regular. They are meeting the needs of the widows and orphans. If you can identify with them, you will be enabled to see how we land in the same condemnations.

We are God's people here and now who need to break all the yokes and begin fasting with the Lord in truth, not in our self-righteousness. We are the people to whom Isaiah is now speaking. However, every one of us will be inclined to think that we are the prophet who is speaking to other people who are all messed up. But we are the messed up people, and Isaiah has come to talk to us today. And when Isaiah talks to us today in the authority of God, I quake under that.

When you can begin to turn from yourself, just like Billy said about his needing to repent, then you have begun to draw close to God. God gives you light then. He covers your rear with glory, and He says to the truly holy man, "Go tell my people." Then you are the prophet, maybe not in office, but certainly in function.

Please be warned, however, that when you go to tell them, they are going to act just like you did five minutes ago. They are going to hear it with the same ears you had, and they are going to think, "Who are you to be telling me this!" It's tough to be the prophet! It is so tough that Isaiah did all this preaching, all this time, and where is the revival? Even when it doesn't happen, we've got to do it anyhow.

Louis: Isaiah must have messed up.

V: And that is the same conclusion that we come to. When you are all alone, and you are out there hammering away, and God is saying, "Go tell my people," and you are out there alone and broken hearted like Jeremiah

who said, "My heart is broken." You know that the people are being misled, and they are scattered, and they don't know what they are doing. They all are convinced that they are on the right path and in tune with God and know exactly where they are going because their watchmen are pleased with what they are doing. When you encounter that broken wall, you are going to be all alone in your warnings, and they are going to criticize you, castigate you, and call you Reverend Doom and Gloom. You will return home wondering in your distress whether or not you are wrong. You will have no human person to bounce your thoughts and doubts off of to find out whether you are right or whether you are just spinning your wheels. You'll go to bed and hide your face in the pillow to cry, and you'll beg God: "God, if there could be just one person, one, just one. Let me have one to respond and get on path."

When you finally get that one, you will rejoice. It will encourage you to double your efforts. Your courage and your heart will grow big, and you'll think, "Man, I can do it when I am in yoke with the Lord." But then you go and you repeat the cycle, and you stick your head in your pillow and cry yourself to sleep. That's the prophet's story, and the cycles just never quit for God's prophet.

Isaiah's cycles never quit, and he goes to his execution. Jeremiah eventually dies in the midst of his cycles. And here we are; we're looking back here at Israel who messed up with Judah following close behind. We have all of this history to learn from, but we are still messed up. The same thing is happening today: the lonely prophets are calling the people to repent, and the people are saying, "Repent from what? Things are going great, attendance is high, and the money is coming in. Our church is growing, and our lives are going good."

Keeping the Sabbath Holy (Isaiah 58:13-14)

Isaiah

58:13 If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, [from] doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking [thine own] words:

58:14 Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken [it].

This is a statement of holiness. The Sabbath is the setting aside of one day of the week exclusively for God. The Jews were not practicing this holiness throughout the day. They had begun pursuing their own pleasures after fulfilling their Temple worship. God was no longer first in their lives even for just one day of the week.

Now for you, the requirement of holiness is that every day is the Sabbath. It is not just one day of the week. It is not an observance; it is a lifestyle, a way of life. Whereas the Sabbath was the setting aside of a day in the Old Testament, it is a setting aside of the person in the New Testament. It is a way of life for the Christian: every day is the Sabbath day if you are in Christ and you focus on holiness, which is to dedicate yourself 24/7 to the Lord. A fast, then, becomes a prayer and meditation part of the Sabbath life because of your total dedication to the Lord. The Christian life is a life owned and used by God alone for His Own purposes. It is not a life in which we map out our own plans and work a Sabbath day into our weekly schedules. No, it is a bond slave's life of serving the Lord, our Wonderful Owner and Master.

The church is God's called out ones, the people who have been set aside to be dedicated completely for the Lord's sole use. That holiness is what Christianity is about.

And if you will surrender to holiness, then you will receive the spiritual promise of God “to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father.” That means that you will not stumble and be snared by the quest for an earthly high place. Also you will participate in the Abrahamic Covenant that is the heritage of Jacob, i.e. you will be a blessing to the world, and those who bless you will be blessed, and those who curse you will be cursed.

The carnal man of God is going to say, God doesn't answer my prayers. What is wrong with God? That is the first thing he will think of: “What is wrong with God? Why doesn't He hear?” The same thing had happened to the Jews who were violating the Sabbath.

Isaiah

59:1 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

59:2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid [his] face from you, that he will not hear.

The problem, when it comes to God hearing us, is not in God; it is in us. It is not because He cannot hear; it is because He will not hear. He chooses not to hear because His people are not Sabbath-life (i.e. holy) people.

The Jews, in the human eye, were doing pretty good, probably better than us; they were following the rules to perfection. Their Sabbath day ceremonies were perfect, and their weekly rule keeping was perfect, but they were a long way from delighting themselves in God. Their lives were pointed inwards because they were living for self when they were seeking pleasures on the Sabbath. God's sanctification is for our lives to be pointed outwards toward ministry to others. For the Jews, it was to be ministry to God on the Sabbath and good-works toward men during the rest of the week.

But when you look through God's eyes, He gives this evaluation of them:

Isaiah

59:3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.

59:4 None calleth for justice, nor [any] pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

59:5 They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper.

59:6 Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works [are] works of iniquity, and the act of violence [is] in their hands.

59:7 Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts [are] thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction [are] in their paths.

59:8 The way of peace they know not; and [there is] no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.

So, what would His description be of us?

Now I think you could make a prophet's sermon on this if you just did the parts of the body; the hands, the fingers, the lips, the tongue, the feet in your description of God's people. Quit describing just the lost people. We need to start looking at the lack of sanctification for the saved people. Class, this passage is describing us. Our iniquity is separating us from God and causing Him to hide His Face and not to hear our prayers. We have become impotent Christians who have narrowed our sanctification down to a day rather than expanding it to our lives. God's Church has become impotent and irrelevant in the course of the world.

Corporate Guilt Brings Suffering to the Innocent

You want to know why things are going so bad for you and for your family and for your country? It is because of the church's lack of sanctification. Our sin is mostly that of omission. We are not obeying the Lord's orders to minister outwardly. Even our inward ministry is self indulgent and pandering to institutionalism. This corporate sin impacts every person in the corporate body.

Corporate sin is not confined to just the church. It applies to any dimension of corporateness. If you are a member of a business company, and the company has corporate sin in it, you are subject to the sin's repercussions. Everybody, even the unknowing person who didn't do the bad thing, is subject to taking a hit. If you are a member of a nation that chooses to do evil, and there is retribution brought on that nation, you and your kids get killed by the bombs that destroy your nation. That is an individual suffering that comes from corporate sin.

Corporate retribution is what God is going to be dishing out at this point. Watch how Isaiah's message begins to change. His speech pattern is going to change in verse 9 to the first person. He is going to be talking about "we," and "us," instead of "they" and "them." And that is because he takes some hits here along with some other good prophets in Judah beside himself. Along with the good prophets, there are innocent people in Judah who have no blood on their hands. The children who have not set policy and made governmental decisions that are leading the nation astray are going to suffer under God's wrath towards Judah. When God brings His wrath down on a nation, people who have nothing to do with those decisions are going to suffer. In the Jewish holocaust, people who didn't know anything about anything, died. Millions, including little children, died

because it was a corporate problem. And so in verse 9:

Isaiah

59:9 Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, [but] we walk in darkness.

59:10 We grope for the wall like the blind, . . .

Just like the Jews of Isaiah's time, we are staggering around like blind men. Our blindness is not all that has changed. The rules and patterns of culture are changing so fast that we have to grope for a wall in the darkness as a blind man. But the structures that were so dependable are changing so that our groping for the wall that was there yesterday has been removed. The walls of law have been removed. We are in the time of lawlessness, and the Man of Lawlessness is about to assume control.

Isaiah

59:10 . . .and we grope as if [we had] no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; [we are] in desolate places as dead [men].

59:11 We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: . . .

See, when we are out there among the people, we roar like bears at the corporate problems, but we do nothing about them because our sanctification has been reduced to mere words instead of actions. Instead of actions that follow our public roars, we cry like a dove when it is time to take action.

Isaiah

59:11 . . . we look for judgment, but [there is] none; for salvation, [but] it is far off from us.

59:12 For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions [are] with us; and [as for] our iniquities, we know them;

See, how Isaiah is identifying with the people? This is what happens to the prophet.

Jesus Christ came to deliver us from our sin, and He identified with us so closely that He preferred the title Son *of Man*.

Identifying with the people is the prophet's life. It will be: *we* hurt, *we* need light, *we* are suffering. It is a first-person identification when he is part of the apostate church and nation.

Isaiah

59:13 In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.

59:14 And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

59:15 Yea, truth faileth; and he [that] departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: . . .

In the time of corporate evil (political correctness), you become the prey when you depart from evil. In this predicament, we need a Redeemer. A redeemer is someone who lifts you out of the predicament and puts you on safe and solid ground to walk again on God's *kenotic* path assigned to you. That is what Jesus did and still does for and through us His watchmen. Exercise the freedom that the Lord has purchased for you. Break all the yokes that have placed you in bondage to the corporate bodies. Yield to the Lord's sanctification of your lives—We must be denying ourselves, taking up our crosses, and following Jesus. Discipleship of Christians is the corporate body's hope.

You prophets take the message to the people at all costs. It doesn't matter if they kill you or not, you must take the message of sanctification to the people. There is still hope. The Redeemer lives. His name is Jesus.

Chapter Questions

1. Why do the beasts come to devour. Because the watchmen are what?
2. Describe the sons of adulterers and whores (Isaiah 57).
3. Effective fasting gains what nine things?

LESSON 13

THE FUTURE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

God's people will all experience some things in the same way, and those are listed below. But others of God's people will experience mourning, grief, and guilt from their false ministries and lack of ministries.

ELEMENTS OF HOPE

(Isaiah 60)

1. We will arise and shine with God's glory (V. 1).

Isaiah

60:1 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

This is a promise to us because of the Redeemer. In the resurrection, we will shine with a share of God's glory. It is not a glory that is generated from within. It is Jesus' glory that He puts upon us. He will proportion it out as He evaluates our works of faithfulness. It is not a promise because of something that we are. It is because of some things that we do, and it is all from the Redeemer.

2. Mercy follows discipline when God favors us (V. 10).

Isaiah

60:10 And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee.

3. Our city's gates of access will always be open (V. 11).

Isaiah

60:11 Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that [men] may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and [that] their kings [may be] brought.

Now what I would like to show you here is the parallel between Isaiah and Revelation. Isaiah has a lot of eschatology in it, and we are in that chapter that deals with eschatology. As a matter of fact the whole rest of the book of Isaiah is going to be dealing with eschatology.

Revelation

21:23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb [is] the light thereof.

21:24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

21:25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

21:26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

21:27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither [whatsoever] worketh abomination, or [maketh] a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Isaiah's description of the gates not being closed is referring to the eschatological city, the city of God that comes down from heaven onto earth, and God comes down to earth. This is after the Great White Throne Judgment, a time in which the saints have been lifted up, and their tears have been wiped away, and the saints are able to walk to and fro into the city and out of the city because the gates are always open, and the glory of the nations, the surrounding nations that are outside of the city are being brought into the city. And so there is a limitation of what can come into the city. The only ones that can come into the city are those who have their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life. And

nothing can come into the city that would bring defilement into the city.

The nations all around outside the city will bring their glory into the city. No unsaved person will be allowed in the city. The parties seem to be Jesus, resurrected saints, nations of people who can come into the city, and people who cannot come into the city.

But what I want to do is give you a question to think about. The question is who are all the people who cannot come inside the city? I want you to ponder this. I also want you to ponder this idea as well: does everyone whose name is written in the Book of Life go in and out of the city?

4. We were hated in the past, but we will be a joy in our eternal excellence (V. 15).

Isaiah

60:15 Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through [thee], I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.

I know that many of you, like Trouble, who have been picked on and despised and mocked and persecuted, have been enduring your forsakenness. However, there is coming a time when you will be manifested as the joy and the apple of God's eye for all the people to recognize. Those who persecuted you will grieve over what they said and did.

5. No violence, waste, or destruction will take place in the land (V. 18).
6. We will call the walls salvation and the gates praise (V. 18).

Isaiah

60:18 Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.

Salvation is a wall of separation between the Christian and the non-Christian. The gate of praise is the only way to get inside the city. When we receive the gift of salvation from

Jesus, praise of Him is a part of that salvation. Justification, as the Lord's marvelous gift, extracts praise from the very depths of our souls. I praise Jesus for His Mercy and Grace that cost Him everything to provide for me. I will praise Him forever.

7. The Lord replaces the sun and moon to provide our eternal light and glory (V.19).

Isaiah

60:19 The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.

There is going to be a spiritual light radiating from the Lord. We are going to see so clearly spiritually, that it is going to be like seeing Scripture in the bright sunshine except that that is even limited. Our spiritual sight will be so brilliant that the clarity of our thought and our understanding of the Word is just going to be infinite compared to where we are now struggling and laboring in our studies.

I can hardly imagine the contrast, i.e. the clear understanding versus the amount of work it takes for me to prepare just one lesson. When I dig in and wrestle around with the interconnections of the Scriptures, I am led into new understandings. Interconnections lead me here, and I wrestle, and that leads me somewhere else to wrestle. And by the time I get back to my starting point, I have a whole new pile of goodies.

Terry: Is this reference to the city being isolated from the rest of the world in which only truth can enter, meaning that we will be able to see everybody for what they truly are.

V: I think that we will not have that level of discernment. God has it, but not us. I think that our light will be about discerning objective Truth, not the subjective hearts of people. God's spiritual sight penetrates the clouds of deceit. However, the words and

actions of deceitful people will be open to our testing against our true understanding of objective truth. At present our understanding is limited by our low level and biased understanding of the objective Scriptures.

8. God's people will be eternally righteous heirs of the land and will continue to glorify God (V. 21).

Isaiah

60:21 Thy people also [shall be] all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.

Our present job is to glorify the Lord. We are to bring glory to the Lord; we glorify Him by showing the world our love for Him by our words and *kenotic* works. We also show love for each other through sacrificial helps, and this further testifies of our love for the Lord. When you do that now in this world as we go along in this life, there is going to come a time when the Lord is going to glorify you.

Can you even think of the Lord glorifying you? It turns your thinking upside down to understand that God is going to glorify you! However, our jobs will not change. We will continue to glorify the Lord—not glorify ourselves because God is in charge of who gets glorified.

When you come to the glorification part of salvation, He's going to do this strange reverse in which He is going to say, "This is my servant." He is going to call you by name, and He's going to bring you up and say, "I am well pleased in him. This is my servant who denied himself, took up his cross, and followed Me." And the whole world is going to look with awe and say, "The Lord knows his name, calls him up there in front and embraces him." God Himself is going to do that to you who sacrificially glorify Him.

The current problem is that we're trying to get the cart before the horse. We want our

glory now, but the cost for our glory now is our eternal glory.

John the Baptist told us how to glorify the Lord with his words and with his life. He said, "I must diminish in order that He may increase." That is your model; the greatest man below Jesus that has ever walked on this planet was John the Baptist. He showed us how to do the *kenotic* life of discipleship. Jesus is going to glorify him because he didn't have a normal life like us. He didn't have family. He didn't have a house. He didn't have a bed. He had only wild animal skins to wear and locusts to eat. He looked like a wild, crazy man. Where was his career? He didn't have a career. What did he have?

John the Baptist's whole thing was to live out there in the desert, and then arise each morning, brush the dirt off of himself, go take a dip in a deserted part of the Jordan River, clean up the best he could, and then go to a gathering point on the Jordan River and holler out and start preaching to the masses: "Repent and be baptized for the Kingdom of God is at hand." At night he had to go find some locusts to eat, seek out a place to sleep in the desert, and lay down wondering if he was going to live through the night because of the wild animals. The next day he did it all over again.

The radical preaching of John the Baptist gained him a small group of disciples. But when the Word came by, he pointed his followers to Him: "There goes the Master." John's disciples left John and followed Jesus. That left John all alone again. He no longer had a following; he didn't have a career. The next thing you know he is arrested and all alone pondering his situation and what the Kingdom of God means. Soon, he gets his head chopped off.

What kind of life was that of John the Baptist's? It was the *kenotic* model lived out for us. We too are to decrease in order that

the Lord may increase. Doing this is how we can glorify Him. If you prove to the world that your whole life is invested in one person, Jesus Christ, when you show the world that you love Him at the cost of your own life, Jesus is going to show the whole world how much He loves you and appreciates you for what you sacrificed for Him. He has already given His sacrifice, of course, which enables you to give your sacrifice. And if you will do it, ahhh, you can't measure the glory that you will have for eternity. Now, how long is your sacrificial life? A hundred years? Ninety? Seventy? Fifty? Compare that to billions and billions and trillions times trillions of years. That is the trade that is offered to you. If you take that trade, you are going to be glorified by God for eternity.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD

(Isaiah 61:1-2).

You have all heard this passage because you have read it in the New Testament.

Isaiah

61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD [is] upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to [them that are] bound;

61:2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit came upon the people to empower them to do great things that God orders. The paradigm changes in the New Testament: the Holy Spirit takes up residence inside us. Where the Old Testament saints had occasional empowerments, we have continual empowerments. However, we do no better than the Old Testament saints because of our lack of belief. We must believe and trust God to activate the power that is inherent in the Holy Spirit who resides in us as our seal of God's ownership.

Jesus preached this same passage when He stood up to read the book in the Temple in order to identify Himself as the anointed One to preach the gospel and heal the people.

Luke

4:18 The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

4:19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

4:20 And he closed the book, and he gave [it] again to the minister, . . .

The Lord has two comings. He has already done one; He's coming again in the future. And when the Lord read this passage he cut off before He got to the part dealing with His second coming. He read only that part concerning His present first coming. When He got to the things pertaining to His second coming, He closed the book and didn't finish the verse.

Notice that Isaiah 61:2 says to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. At that comma right after the word Lord, He closed the Book. He didn't finish the verse. And the reason He didn't is because He was still trying to help the people to understand His first coming. It was too much for the people to try to think about the second coming.

The way Isaiah wrote these two verses, it all looks like it is just talking about one coming, but it is not. In prophecy when God shows a prophet future events, he may see separate things that look like they are occurring together. It is like seeing the tops of a series of mountains that are separated in time. He sees an event on top of each mountain, and it looks like the series of events all occur together at the same time (see Chart 13.1). And so the prophecy on the top of the first mountain and the prophecy on the second mountain, and another on the third mountain

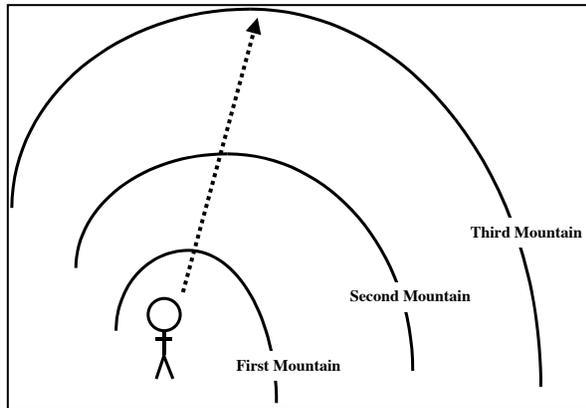


Chart 13.1

will all be seen in the prophet's gaze. It will look to and be stated by the prophet as three things that occur at the same time. That is how multiple events will be reported in the same verse. The prophet just reports what he sees. He doesn't distinguish the separations of time between the events. The Lord will help us make those distinctions at the illumination stage of our reading. What the prophet describes is his sighting line that covers long stretches of time.

Isaiah described the Redeemer's actions in two comings in the same passage as if it were just one coming. All of these actions, you see, begin to blend into one picture. And so when you look at chapter 61 verses 1 and 2, you have a picture of the sacrificial first coming, and then the judgmental second coming. When the Lord read this passage in the Synagogue, He read down through the first coming, and then He closed the Book in the middle of a sentence. He read, and then when He got down to the "acceptable year of the Lord," He closed the Book and handed it back. The reason He did that is because He knew that there was another large period of time before His second coming. The first mountaintop is all in verse 1 and half of verse 2, and a second mountaintop is in the last half of verse 2, which is "the day of vengeance of our God to comfort all that mourn."

All that mourn is basically the subject of the rest of this book. We are going to be looking at that, and those who reject the Messiah will be those who mourn. However, there will be another mourning group that did accept the Messiah, and that is where you and I are the subjects of the rest of the book.

LOST PEOPLE

When we are dealing with Isaiah's prophecies to the external nations, he is not addressing God's people. He is speaking to the lost people. Otherwise the prophets are talking to God's people. It is our drunkenness and lack of sanctification that God has been condemning. We will be shown what the drunks and those who are mourning are doing.

GOD'S LOVE VERSUS HATE

God Loves His Servants and Judgment but Hates the Replacement of Service with Offerings

Isaiah

61:6 But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: [men] shall call you the Ministers of our God: . . .

God gives every Christian the office and title of Priest and entrusts His ministry to you. You will be named Priests of the Lord and the people will call you Ministers of God. But look at verse 8 for God's love versus His hate.

Isaiah

61:8 For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; . . .

What he is saying here has already been touched on several times this semester. God doesn't care about your sacrifices if you are not going to practice judgment in your life of service. As a matter of fact, if you think that you can give sacrifice and forsake righteous ministry, you are a robber. You're trying to buy something that can't be bought. And if you think you can gain God's approval in that fashion, you will have actually lost it, and will

be living dangerously: "For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering."

Judgment means that your actions come under the rules of justice. He wants justice from you. What that means, as far as a secular example, would be that you give a day's work for a day's pay. Another example would be giving proper supervision of employees that work for you, i.e. you are just but not abusive. Another example would be in a buy-sell transaction. In this kind of transaction, it is incumbent upon you to make it a win-win transaction. The buyer must get a good deal, and the seller must get a good deal too. If you sell something to somebody else, and you gouge them and take them to the cleaners, you'd better go back and give them their money back or make it right with them because it is incumbent on you to make it a win-win. Anybody that is a child of God doing business in this world has to make it win-win because that is God's multiplying economy. Everybody wins under God's economy. When somebody starts losing, you are gouging, you are robbing, you are taking them to the cleaners, you are crafting a win-lose transaction. We are prohibited from striving for a win-lose economy in our practice of justice.

Class, you are the watchmen of chapter 62. The watchmen get up on the walls to keep watch. You don't get to sleep, you don't get to have the good time, you don't get to go down and sit at the banquet table, and do all the self-indulgent things because you are up here on the wall. You are watching, you are God's appointed watchman, and if you lie around and start sleeping as a drunk, then the people are going to be unaware of dangers (see Chart 13.2). The walls are going to be breached, and the enemy is going to invade and capture God's people.

Allen: Concerning judgment, lawsuits are real eye-opening experiences because you go in thinking it is about finding truth and

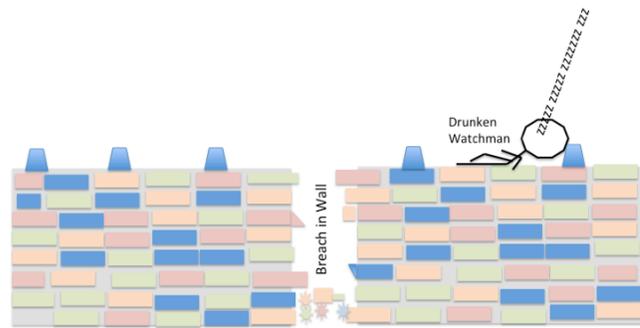


Chart 13.2

justice. But it is about the one who makes the best case in court. Justice and truth have nothing to do with winning the suit.

V: Yes, there is much deceitful argument in court cases. I have also experienced deceitful arguments in business meetings. Even employees of the same company ply their deceits in order to win their arguments in company meetings. Deceit and lies replace truth and justice. But for the Christian, truth and justice must always be his part.

Isaiah

62:6 I have set watchmen upon thy walls,
O Jerusalem, [which] shall never hold
their peace day nor night: ye that make
mention of the LORD, keep not silence,
62:7 And give him no rest, till he
establish, and till he make Jerusalem a
praise in the earth.

Now, you watchmen, this says that you don't shut up. You keep on hammering out the Lord's warnings. The idea is for you to spur the people of God into making the city of God (the Christian life) into a place of praise, not a place of derision and mockery. The only one who performs this work of warning is the watchman, and if you are in this class, you are a watchman. Don't try to escape that. You can go out and claim that you are a nobody who can't do that big of a job. Don't believe and spout that lie. All things can be done through and with God. You are an appointed watchman of God. No escape! No excuses! and I will witness against you in the

judgment if you shirk your assignment. You have heard it.

You are a watchman like God describes: "I have set watchman upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night. You that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest until he establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

Okay, I am going to move on to chapter 63 and deal with the two kinds of God's people.

TWO CLASSES OF GOD'S PEOPLE

There are going to be two classes of God's people. On one side are those who are mourning in this life, and on the other side are those who are mourning in the eschaton. But they are all God's people.

God's People Who Mourn in this Life

When we looked at that scripture prior to the one about the vengeance, it is about the first coming (see the cross on the first mountain in Chart 13.3). The second mountain depicts the Lord's second coming and the

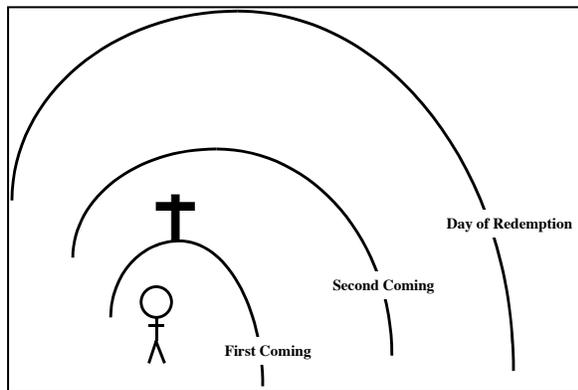


Chart 13.3

day of vengeance, and the third mountain depicts the day of redemption. The first coming was to sacrifice, and the second coming is to rule and judge.

Isaiah

63:4 For the day of vengeance [is] in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.

The first coming is when the Lord came and sacrificed His Life in order to redeem us from sin and its penalty. This coming is depicted by the cross in Chart 13.3.

As we live according to the *kenosis*, we will be the sacrificial watchman going downward in grief and mourning. Our grief will increase as we persevere to stand watch on the wall as a watchman. The more you sacrifice the good life, the more you are going to hurt.

During your life of ministry, you are going to look around and ask why you can't have the things and fun of the good life? You will not be able to enjoy the fellowship by being normal and celebrating and enjoying all the good things of life with all the people: "Why can't the people just treat me half-way decent? Why can't I just have the crumbs that fall from the table? Why can't I have a life?"

It is because you are just like John the Baptist. You are just like Isaiah; you are just like Jeremiah. You are just like the Apostles. You are just like our forefathers in the Reformation. You are just like Jesus. You don't have your life; the Lord has it.

Menno Simons, the father of the Mennonites, the Dutch Anabaptists, complained that he never got to sleep more than three consecutive nights in the same bed because he had to do his ministry while running for his life from the Catholics. Because of the privations during his life of flight from the Catholics, he became blind and crippled in his old age. He wrote a general letter to all the churches asking for help and refuge for his dying days. So, it is a hard life of ministry before you because you are the one who stands between hell and the people. It is a hard road for the watchman.

God values greatly how people live sacrificially in the *kenosis* for Him. Our denying ourselves and suffering all the way to the grave glorifies Him. After death He is going to raise us up, and He is going to take vengeance on those who caused us to mourn. He is going to glorify most those who sacrificed the most because of their love for Him. He is going to joy over them and lift them up as His crown jewels. You are going to wag your tail, and your ears are going to perk up like a hound dog (laughter). And you are just going to melt in the wonder of it all.

“For the day of vengeance [is] in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.” Your year of the redeemed comes on the upward line of the *kenosis* **after death**. You don't go upwards until finally going through the cross. Even though you guys have been going down and demonstrating your sacrificial love for God, your year has not come. There is going to come a day, however, and you can count on it. You are going to rejoice so much over your rewards for suffering that your whole life of pain and sacrifice will diminish into practically nothing in contrast to the glory of your final redemption.

God's People Who Will Mourn after Death

Concerning vengeance, God says:

Isaiah

63:6 And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, . . .

God is not talking about lost people at this judgment. The lost people will be judged at the Great White Throne Judgment. Here in this verse, He is talking about the judgment of His people who have been drunk with their contentment in their perverted holiness and their self-righteousness, and their depending upon the sacrifice to appease God as a substitute for righteous stewardship of their lives and ministry. And so if His people want to be drunk that way, then He is going to make us drunk in another way—drunk in His

fury. He is going to fill us up with the wine of his fury, and we are going to be so drunk with it, that we will be unable to focus on anything else.

Isaiah

63:7 I will mention the loving kindnesses of the LORD, [and] the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses.

63:8 For he said, Surely they [are] my people, children [that] will not lie: so he was their Saviour.

63:9 In all their affliction he was afflicted.

. . .

So you see, as we proceed downwards in our *kenotic* sanctification, the Lord is afflicted. When you are alert and on the wall, and you hurt and are tired, and go without fleshly satisfaction in life, He, too, is afflicted. He, too, feels that same pain. He bears the same problems with you in your yoke with Him. Class, I am searching for the words; I can't express what my heart is saying. My heart is breaking for you.

Isaiah

63:9 . . . and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

This is the *kenotic* path that His people are supposed to go on. For those who do go on this path, He bears the same affliction. His angels carry you watchmen, but then He says,

Isaiah

63:10 But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, [and] he fought against them.

I must caution you not to rebel. Be like John the Baptist go all the way. You've only got one life to live. Live it for Jesus. Give everything to Him. And when you do, you will go down this difficult *kenotic* path, yes,

but Jesus goes every inch of the way with you. But if you don't follow Him, if you choose to rebel by climbing up, then He starts to war against you. Class, you watchmen, you cannot win this war against Jesus. The different kind of hell that you will walk through in the war with Jesus is much greater than the hell you will walk through in your war against the devil.

The Ministers of God must lead the people in a sacrificial journey.

Isaiah

63:14 As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.

God's Spirit empowers His ministers to lead God's people to glorify God's Name. Sacrifice is a downward journey into the valley and shadow of death (Psalm 23).

Heaven's Blessing for God's Servants

Isaiah

64:4 For since the beginning of the world [men] have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, [what] he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

This is the blessing that is promised to you, but I want to interpret the road to that blessing for you. The description of the blessing is extremely high, and it can be seen way out here on the third mountain in Chart 13.2. To get to that blessing takes the downward move in the *kenosis* during your life in the flesh.

Larry: The downward move is during this life, and the blessing occurs on the upward move after this life in the *kenosis*.

V: Yes, the blessing occurs only on the right side of the *kenosis*. And if you start interpreting the blessing on the left side of the *kenosis*, then you are getting the wrong idea of ministry, and there are many who have done that.

Let me show you that verse 6 is a replay on Isaiah's finding himself in the light of God's presence in chapter 6.

Isaiah

64:6 But we are all as an unclean [thing], and all our righteousnesses [are] as filthy rags; . . .

You remember us reading about that? All right now, watch this in verse 8.

Isaiah

64:8 But now, . . .

You all know by now what now is. Now is where we are in our pilgrimages on the left side of the *kenosis*.

Isaiah

64:8 But now, O LORD, thou [art] our father; we [are] the clay, and thou our potter; and we all [are] the work of thy hand.

64:9 Be not wroth very sore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we [are] all thy people.

Now, here we are. The Potter shapes us, we are the clay; the Potter is the Lord. He gives each one of you a path to walk in. It is a difficult path. If it was easy, anybody could do it, but He has made it hard enough that you cannot meet the challenge with just your all. You will be given just enough of His added Wisdom and Power to push through that super human challenge in order to bring true honor to the Lord.

Isaiah

64:11 Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste.

If you are a watchman on the wall, where is your palace, where are your pleasant things? Like John the Baptist, you don't have them.

Isaiah

64:12 Wilt thou refrain thyself for these

[things], O LORD? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?

This is the question that the watchman asks as he is living the sacrificial life: "Where is my palace? It has burned up with fire. Where are my pleasant things? I have no pleasant things. Lord, will you continue to afflict me like this?" See, you will ask these questions. Is it worthwhile to be afflicted by God who is your Potter, and you are the clay? Is it worthwhile for you to be shaped into such a suffering servant? Will it be worthwhile to you? Please understand that we all have to deal with these questions that will flood into our minds.

Isaiah

65:2 I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, . . .

The rebellious people are those who say it is not worthwhile or neglect the ministry because of their ignorance. They are substituting worship and ceremonies for their good works of ministry. They want the pleasant things and the palace while someone else is on the wall. Look at verse 5 how they describe themselves:

Isaiah

65:5 Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. . .

..

Notice that these people are talking to God's prophet. Their contentment with their self-righteousness, as demonstrated in their temple worship and prosperity, is interpreted by them as holiness.

The prophet is God's holy spokesman, and the prophet's words are not just his own. They are warnings from God to the people. To reject those warnings because you are content with your religiousness and prosperity is to expose yourself to the danger that God is warning of.

Isaiah

65:8 . . . Destroy it not; for a blessing [is]

in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all.

65:9 And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.

Isaiah

65:11 But ye [are] they that forsake the LORD, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink offering unto that number.

65:12 Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose [that] wherein I delighted not.

Isaiah

65:14 Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart,

Singing is a certainty on the right side of the *kenosis*. Weeping is a certainty on the left side of the *kenosis* because of the requirements of discipleship.

Singing, while on the left side of the *kenosis*, is in anticipation of the celebratory right side of the *kenosis*. Even in the midst of our weeping, we can still rejoice and sing because of the surety of the victory that has been won by our Champion the Lord Jesus. The victory has been won and given to us as a sure possession in the midst of our sufferings.

Isaiah

65:14 Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.

65:15 And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord GOD shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name:

65:16 That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth;

Now I want you to hear that this is the only path to blessing. If you are going to be

blessed, it has to be in God. If you bless yourself in the earth, it must be via sacrifice. It is not via comfort and prosperity as a goal. That would be the upside down *kenosis*. To be blessed in God, you must go through the *kenosis*. The reversal will cause the loss of God's blessings. Blessings in the earth will be by God's honoring and using you as His slave, and they will climax at the third mountain.

Isaiah

65:16 That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, . . .

We must ingrain this principle into our very beings: all blessings are in God and by God. All other sought blessings in the earth are false blessings because they are temporary and they rob us of the eternal blessings. The good life becomes a curse because it robs God of servants who have the same mind as His Son.

Isaiah

65:17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

65:18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever [in that] which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

65:19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

Notice that troubles are forgotten once you come across the divide between the temporal to the eternal. When you get to the eschaton, your time of suffering on earth will seem like nothing! And so pay your price now in this life. Be God's watchman on the wall, be alert, sacrifice your desires and comforts to God for the welfare of His people.

Okay, turn to chapter 66. This person is making the *kenotic* sacrifices that are required of God's minister.

Isaiah

66:2 . . . but to this [man] will I look, [even] to [him that is] poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

Now, it is time for the church to begin trembling at the Word of God. We must realize that God Himself has spoken the Words of Scripture. They are His Words here and now to you and me. God's Words are not to be debated, they are to be trembled at, obeyed, and elicit fear of God because He holds your physical and eternal life in His Hands. We must fear the One that can cast us into hell.

Isaiah

66:3 He that killeth an ox [is as if] he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, [as if] he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, [as if he offered] swine's blood; he that burneth incense, [as if] he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.

The one that is the clay in the Potter's hands travels the *kenosis*, is obedient, sacrificial, trembling at the Word, humble, and contrite of spirit. That is the man that God wants as His watchman on the wall. The one climbing on the reverse *kenosis*, is the one that chooses his own way, and delights in his abominable choices, which choices, incidentally, seem like great choices to human wisdom.

We choose! Do you choose to go up in self-indulgence, or do you choose to be a sacrifice?

Isaiah

66:4 I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose [that] in which I delighted not.

This refrain repeats over and over again in these chapters. "They continue to choose the things that I don't delight in," is what God says. Yes, those refusing to answer God's call can choose their own paths, but God is going to choose their end results. He says, "I will choose their delusions and bring their fears upon them."

Isaiah

66:5 Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; . . .

Class, God's command is to us. We are His watchmen who are commanded to hear and tremble.

Isaiah

66:5 . . . Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.

Your Christian brothers and sisters are going to be ashamed because of their persecuting you.

The world, of course, is going to persecute you. Lost people are supposed to hate and persecute you because they are sons of the devil. BUT let me tell you who else is going to persecute you! Those Christians who are climbing are going to despise and persecute these who are traveling the *kenotic* path. They are going to cast you out, ruin your reputation, say all manner of evil against you, just like God's people did Isaiah, John the Baptist, Jeremiah, and Jesus.

Please notice the mercenary evangelists and pastors that get such a large following who applaud and admire them. True watchmen get no such support. Why is that? Those followers and admirers of mercenary ministers are on the upside down *kenosis*, and they admire those who are achieving the results that they themselves want for themselves.

Isaiah

66:15 For, behold, the LORD will come

with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.

Isaiah

66:21 And I will also take of them for priests [and] for Levites, saith the LORD.

66:22 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.

66:23 And it shall come to pass, [that] from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.

66:24 And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

Now I want to ask you some questions for you to ponder. Who is this talking about? When He says that all flesh from one new moon to the next new moon, one Sabbath to the next Sabbath will worship me. Who is the flesh? Is this in the eschaton? He says that those who have "transgressed against me for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh." Now who is this being abhorred? And who is the flesh that is doing the abhorring? Where do the lost people fit in this scenario? Where do the *kenotic* Christians fit? Where do the climbing Christians fit? Where do the people in the flesh fit? Are the people in the flesh lost people, saved people, or both?

Certainly, I think that, along with the lost people, those "Christians" who are persecuting you, dragging the Lord's name through the gutter, saying they are saved, confessing Jesus as their Lord, and twisting the words of the Bible to justify their evil deeds, will be an abhorrence in the blessed time? Could it be that those who are going to heaven, but act

like they are going to hell, could they end up being an abhorrence to all flesh?

If there is natural man that gets saved in the Millennium and lives all the way to the end, I think that he will continue living in the eschaton. God says that there will be no end to His Kingdom (Is. 9:7 & Lk. 1:33). No end means that there is no end in either quantity or quality. I wonder whether the saved people who are still alive and in the flesh will continue to live and multiply for eternity.

A kingdom without end will grow and expand and expand and expand, never to end in its increase. Could those who have been increasing in the flesh be the ones to look with abhorrence upon some of the saints of God who have been such a despicable model for Christianity?

Saints whose lives were on the upside down *kenosis* will have nothing in heaven. Where are their clothes; they don't have any. Where is their mansion? They don't have one. Where are their crowns? They don't have any. Where do they walk? Can they walk into the heavenly City of Jerusalem through the open gates?

It is time for us to take serious the commandments of God. This life is not a game. People all around us are giving their lives for their confession that Jesus is Lord. Can we watchmen do less? Jesus bought you with the highest price ever possible. You belong to Him. Glorify Him, but you can only do it at your own expense. You cannot climb. You must practice the *kenosis*. You must deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus. You must be the alert watchman. You cannot demand to have the comforts of life and all the pleasant things because that comes after this life.

The challenge is before you. Are you man or woman enough to take up this challenge and run with it?

I am going to close here. I am so distraught right now that I'm trembling. I am so serious I can hardly breathe. This continuous challenge is tough on me. I am taking this challenge and hanging on to the hem of Jesus' garment for dear life, and I want you to take hold too.

CONCLUSION

Folks, I shrink under this prophecy from God. As God gave me the lessons, I found that I fell short, way short, shorter than I could ever have imagined. These lessons are to me. They are so hard to hear that I fail to understand why God would use me to proclaim them to others. Yes, I know that I am a watchman on the wall. Shoot, I live on the wall. But I have spent a lot of my life on that wall asleep and drunken. So, please understand that I am the recipient of these lessons, and all I am doing is letting you listen in on God's explaining to me why He is escorting me to the woodshed. I know one thing—the alarms are ringing loudly in my soul. I hope that they will ring in your soul too before God grabs you by the arm and starts heading for the woodshed.

God uses His prophets to give His messages to His people. Sometimes, however, the prophet will include specific warnings to other people. Please know that when the warning is to others who are not God's own chosen people, the words will clearly so indicate. This book of Isaiah is nearly all dedicated to the warning of Israel, Judah, and the Church.

The collapses of Israel and Judah were in process when God called Isaiah. Israel was committing open idolatry with Baal and was about to be divorced by God and put away out of existence. Judah was practicing a disguised idolatry. Judah's idolatry was of their

worship in God's Temple. We saw this idolatry clearly spelled out in the book of Jeremiah.

Isaiah was called by God to awaken His people to their purpose in life. The people of God were elected to be God's servants who would disclose God to the world and call all peoples to repentance. These two functions are outward ministries. But Israel chose to announce and call all Israelis to worship Baal in order to obtain Baal's blessings. And Judah chose to immerse itself into the good life of self-righteousness that is achieved in practicing the Temple rituals of sacrifice and worship in order to obtain God's blessings.

In both Israel's and Judah's cases, the people of God were compartmentalizing their lives. They did their religious duty in their religious rituals. They lived the rest of their lives in the pursuit of fame and fortune.

Where were the leaders? The people were being led down the primrose path, and their leaders were praising the progress. Their leaders, God's watchmen, were on the wall, but they were drunk. To be drunk is to lose focus. The wall had a breach in it. Idolatry had invaded God's people because they were focused on achieving the good life. Did the watchmen alert the people? No!

My dear Brother, you are the watchman on the wall now.

Answers to Chapter Questions

Chapter 1

1. Contrast the offices of prophet and priest.
 Prophet: faces the people, back to God, proclaiming God's message to the people
 Priest: faces God, back to the people, taking the people's petitions to God
2. What is holiness?
 Holiness is a clean vessel that is set aside for God's sole use.
3. Describe the Syro-Ephraimitic Crisis.
 1. King Pekah of Israel and King Rezin of Syria have formed an alliance to oppose Assyria.
 2. The Assyrian Empire is composed of all the contiguous countries except for Israel, Syria, and Judah.
 3. Pekah and Rezin threaten to attack Judah in order to force Judah to ally with them against Assyria.
 4. Jotham of Judah wants to stay independent.
 5. King Ahaz assumes the throne in Judah.
 6. Rezin and Pekah attack Judah from the north. The Philistines attack him from the west, and Edom attacks from the south.
 7. Ahaz appeals to Tiglath-Pileser.
 8. Damascus is destroyed in 732 BC by Assyria.
 9. Shalmaneser succeeds Tiglath-Pileser as the king of Assyria.
 10. Hoshea, king of Israel, decided to revolt at that change
 11. Sargon II succeeded Shalmaneser and destroyed Israel in 721 BC.
4. What is the early history of Judah after the fall of Israel?
 1. Hezekiah, King of Israel, was urged to join Egypt and Philistia in the Ashdod rebellion in 713 BC.
 2. Isaiah counseled against the revolt and went naked for three years in protest.
 3. Judah heeded Isaiah and escaped Sargon's crushing the revolt in 711 BC.
 4. Sennacherib succeeded Sargon as king of Assyria.
 5. Hezekiah thought this would be a good time to revolt so he joined Egypt's revolt.
 6. Isaiah counseled against the revolts because of alliances with foreign powers. It was leaning on the arm of flesh r/t leaning on God.
 7. Sennacherib conquered many cities of Judah and shut up Hezekiah like a bird in a cage.
 8. Sennacherib demanded the surrender of Jerusalem.
 9. Isaiah counseled Hezekiah to wait and depend on God for salvation. This action required a faith that was in spite of the seeming impossibility of surviving.
5. What are the three major divisions of the book of Isaiah?
 1. Decline of Israel and Judah, chapters 1-39.
 2. Babylonian Exile of Judah, chapters 40-55.
 3. Judah after the return from the exile, chapters 56-66

Chapter 2

1. List the six messages in chapters 1 through 39.
 1. Morality
 2. Pride
 3. Philosophy of History
 4. Faith in God is preferred over political alliances.
 5. The remnant will be purged but not annihilated.
 6. The personal Messiah is foretold.
2. List the three messages in chapters 40-55
 1. Israel's God is central and unique.
 2. Concerning eschatology, there is an intense longing and expectation.
 3. The four suffering servant passages.
3. List the two messages of chapters 56-66
 1. A renewed interest in worship.
 2. Sin and judgment issues into the new heaven and earth.
4. Name the 7 Oracles of Isaiah 1.

Oracle #1 Covenant lawsuit, Isaiah 1:2-3

Oracle #2 Divine judgment, Isaiah 1:4-9

Oracle #3 Religion without morality is worthless, Isaiah 1:10-17

Oracle #4 Forgiveness and blessing is available, Isaiah 1:18-20

Oracle #5 Moral decay of God's people, Isaiah 1:21-23

Oracle #6 Discipline is redemptive, Isaiah 1:24-26

Oracle #7 The righteous will be redeemed, and the wicked will be destroyed, Isaiah 1:27-31

Chapter 3

1. Tell what is known of Isaiah as a human being including his family and his ministry?
 1. Isaiah means "the Lord is salvation."
 2. Born in Jerusalem in 760 B.C.
 3. His father was Amoz who was the possible brother of King Amaziah (2 Kings 14).
 4. His wife was a prophetess (Isaiah 8:3).
 5. His sons were Shearjashub (Isaiah 7:3). It means "a remnant shall return." The second son is Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz (Isaiah 8:3). The name means "the spoil speeds, the prey hastes."
 6. Called in 742 B.C., the year of Uzziah's death (Isaiah 6:1).
 7. He was sawed in two by Manasseh (Hebrews 11:37 and non-canonical sources)
 8. He served under five kings.
 9. He was a prophet for the decline of Israel, for the Babylonian exile, and for the return from the exile.
 10. The concurrent prophets were Micah in Judah and Amos and Hosea in Israel.
2. Describe Judah under its kings during Isaiah's time.
 1. Uzziah, 783-42 B.C.
 2. Jotham (742-35 B.C.). An easy description for him. He did the same as his father.
 3. Ahaz (735-15 B.C.). Judah went into a state of apostasy under his reign.
 4. Hezekiah (715-687 B.C.). Judah was reformed and went through a great renewal.
 5. Manasseh (687-42 B.C.). Judah went into full apostasy.
3. How did Judah perceive itself under Uzziah, and how did Isaiah perceive it?
 1. With the prosperity Judah had the following false conclusions:
 - a. God's covenant with Israel was indissoluble.
 - b. Israel discharged her covenant responsibilities via cult and sacrifice.

- c. The Day of the Lord was seen to be triumph for God and Israel.
 - d. God will never allow Jerusalem to be captured.
2. Isaiah's View
 - a. The poor is oppressed.
 - b. Injustice
 - c. Desire for wealth and power.
 - d. Indifference to God's ethical demands.
 4. What is the relationship between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the book of Isaiah. (Okay, I am going to answer from the answer sheet from the midterm so I will get it exactly right.)
 1. The Masoretic text of A.D. 800 is close to the Qumran text found in 1947.
 2. Two Qumran texts dated 200 B.C. of Isaiah were found.
 3. One text is complete and the other is a fragment of about a third.
 4. Both of these Qumran texts agree almost word for word; therefore the text has not changed since the birth of Christ.
 5. Scroll number 1 is 17 sheets (24 feet by 10.2 inches high.)
 5. What is the pattern of Isaiah's encounter with God?
 1. Saw God.
 2. Woe is me for I am lost.
 3. No painless cure for sin.
 4. Heard God.
 5. Volunteered to be sent.
 6. The sending by God.
 7. Warning from God.
 8. How long? The cry of distress.
 9. Apostasy worsening.
 10. The remnant returns = hope.

Chapter 4

1. What are the charges against His people in chapter 2?
 1. Verse 6: It is that they are soothsayers.
 2. Pleasing themselves in the children of strangers
 3. Rich.
 4. Might military.
 5. Verse 8: Idolatry.
 6. Lofty
 7. Haughty.
2. What are the symptoms for the disintegration of society?
 1. The government will be by children, not statesmen. Verses 1-4
 2. Oppression will be on every side. Verse 5
 3. The choice of government will be economic, not moral. Verses 8-9
 4. Ruin comes from going against God. Verse 8
3. Yes, what are the six woes of chapter 5.
 1. Seekers of riches.
 2. The drunkards and self-indulgent people who leave God's work undone.
 3. Harnessed to their sin, challenging God to prove them wrong.
 4. Reversers of good and evil.
 5. The wise in their own eyes.
 6. Perverters of justice for self gain.
5. Rulers and the people will be proud of homosexuality. Verses 9
6. The Law of the Harvest. Verses 10-11
7. The children oppressed God's people, and women rule them. Verse 12
8. The princes oppress the poor. Verse 14-15
9. The proud, haughty women.. Verse 16-26

4. Draw the *kenosis*, give Scripture reference.

See Chart 4.1, Page 47

Chapter 5

1. Who had his life extended by God, how long was it extended, what sign was granted, and then describe this person before the extension and afterward.
 1. Hezekiah had his life extended
 2. For fifteen (15) years.
 3. The sign was the reversing of time by 10^o.
 4. Before the extension Hezekiah was the best king that Judah had ever had.
 5. After the extension, Hezekiah was proud and showed off his possessions to Merodach-Baladan of Babylon.
2. What are God's instructions to Isaiah himself as a person. Isaiah 8:11-13
 1. Do not walk like the people.
 2. Do not promote confederacy.
 3. Do not fear political power.
 4. Fear God.
3. What is the Law of the Harvest. Chapter 8
 - a. The Word of God is available to disciples. Verse 16
 - b. The Word of God is not available to the house of Judah. Verse 17
 - c. The Word of God is replaced by familiar spirits and wizards. Verse 19
 - d. Those speaking not in accord with the Word of God have no light in them. Verse 20
 - e. They will be hungry and in darkness (verses 21 and 22).
4. What are the meanings of the names that Isaiah gives to the Messiah (verses 6 and 7).
 - a. Wonderful Counselor—a wonderful administrator.
 - b. The mighty God—supremacy.
 - c. The everlasting Father—eternal care.
 - d. The Prince of Peace—harmony.

Chapter 6

1. Describe the apostasy, which the leaders brought to the land.
 1. The leaders cause error. (Verse 16)
 2. The followers are destroyed. (Verse 16)
 3. God does not excuse followers (verse 17).
 4. God does not set aside the Law of the Harvest (verse 17).
 5. God is ready to forgive (verses 17 and 21).
 6. Wickedness goes through the land like a fire (verse 18).
7. God will receive His people's repentance (verse 21).
2. What are the nine burdens.
 1. The burden of Babylon.
 2. The burden of Moab
 3. Burden of Damascus.
 4. Burden of Egypt.
 5. Burden of the desert.
 6. Burden of Edom (Dumah)
 7. Burden of Upon Arabia.
 8. The Burden of the Valley of Vision.
 9. The Burden of Tyre.

Chapter 7

- What are the two forms of drunkenness?
- a. Alcoholic (physical)

- b. Good life of the world's system (spiritual)

Chapter 8

- 1. What is the woe on God’s people?
Drunkenness, a life lacking focus and purpose.
- 2. What are the two kinds of fear in God’s people?
Fear of God through the precepts of God and fear of God directly.

Chapter 9

- 1. What is it that Isaiah says will endure forever?
The Word of God.
- 2. What are the benefits of redemption?
 - a. You are called by name.
 - b. You are a possession of God.
 - c. You are accompanied by God; that is through rivers and fire, i.e. through your trials.
 - d. You are precious in God’s sight.
 - e. You are loved by God. Love is sacrificial; it is unilateral sacrifice for the welfare of the recipient. It is not for the welfare of the lover. It is for the welfare of the beloved.
- f. God will sacrifice men for you.
- g. You will be gathered by God.
- h. You will be glorified.
- 3. What is the two-fold duty?
 - a. You will be my witnesses.
 - b. Holiness.
- 4. What is the federalism principle?
Every member of the group participates in the penalty for the group’s uncleanness. Also every member of the group participates in the blessings for the group’s cleanness.

Chapter 10

- 1. What are the characteristics of apostasy?
 - a. The people will swear by God not in truth nor in righteousness. Verse 1.
 - b. They are obstinate, stiff-necked and hardheaded. Verse 4.
 - c. They will not witness. Verse 6.
 - d. They see without knowing. That is also in verse 6.
 - e. They hear without hearing. Verses 6 and 7.
 - f. Their ears are closed. Verse 8.
 - g. They are treacherous. Verse 8.
 - h. They are transgressors from the womb. Verse 8.
 - i. Their cure is to obey God. Verses 17 and 18.
- 2. Complete the following chart.

	Servant Song #1 Is. 42:1-4	Servant Song #2, Is. 49:1-6	Servant Song #3, Is. 50:4-9	Servant Song #4, Is. 52:13–53:12
Relationship with God				
Gift of the Spirit				
Purpose of the Gift				
Ministry Style				
Mission				

3. What suggestions have been made for the identity of the servant in the Songs?
 - a. Unequivocally identified with Israel.
 - b. If the servant is interpreted collectively then there is an anomaly effecting its own renewal.
 - c. This anomaly is the most serious obstacle to the collective view.
 - d. The tension between individual and collective interpretations is inherent in the text.
 - e. The fulfillment is by Christ.
4. List the three hearkens and the three awakens.

Hearkens

1. Look unto Abraham for the example of God's blessing.
2. Lift your eyes to heaven; it will vanish, but salvation is eternal.
3. Fear not the reproach of men, they will be eaten. Eaten by worms.

Awakens.

1. The arm of the Lord will fight for God's people.
2. God's fury will come upon Jerusalem's oppressors.
3. Zion will be redeemed without money.

Chapter 11

1. If the Missio Dei is going to be carried forward by us in our sanctification, why have we failed?
We have rejected the doctrine of sanctification.
2. Israel knew the Scriptures. So, why did Israel fail to understand its mission in the world?

Their conclusion was come to naturally based on their presuppositions of a political Messiah.

3. The Church knows the Old and New Testaments. So why is the Church failing in its mission in the world?

We have adopted the presupposition of a Santa Claus understanding of God. We expect blessings from a savior who has paid it all and purchased a life of ease for us.

Chapter 12

1. Why do the beasts come to devour. Because the watchmen are:
 - a. Blind.
 - b. Ignorant.
 - c. Dumb dogs that cannot bark.
 - d. Sleeping.
 - e. Lying down.
 - f. Loving to slumber.
 - g. Greedy dogs that can never have enough.
 - h. Shepherds without understanding.
 - i. Doing their own thing.
 - j. Motivated by self-gain.
 - k. Drunkards
 - l. Anticipating a better tomorrow.
2. Describe the sons of adulterers and whores (Isaiah 57).
 - a. Sticking their tongue out at God (V. 4).

- b. Engaging in idolatry (V. 5).
- c. Sacrificing children (V. 5).
- d. Making drink and meat offerings (V. 6 – 8).
- e. Playing up to the king (V. 9).
- f. Propagating idolatry over the earth (V. 9).
- g. Debasing themselves (V. 9).
- h. Holding to continuous hope and not grieved by designing their own lives (V. 10).
- i. Having no fear of God (V. 11).

3. Effective fasting gains these nine things
 - a. Our light will shine forth.
 - b. Our health will spring forth speedily.
 - c. Our paths will straighten toward righteousness.

- d. Our reward is that the Lord is glorified, and we will share in that glory in eternity.
- e. Our prayers are heard as He draws near.
- f. God will guide us continuously.
- g. Our spirits fail not to overflow and become a source of refreshment for others.
- h. Your students will build upon your work that is true to the original work of God.
- i. You will also be called the restorer of paths.
- j. You will be known as the repairer of the breach.

**PERSONAL LEARNING ASSESSMENT PLAN
FOR CREDIT TOWARD THE CERTIFICATE IN DISCIPLESHIP STUDIES**

If you want credit for this course toward the Certificate In Discipleship Studies, you will need to write an answer to the following three questions and email them to:

cd.iac@4disciples.org

Save your answers in either Word or in Rich text format (RTF) and send them as an attachment to your email message. To save in RTF, just click save as and then choose rich text format in the drop down window.

1. List the full name of this course.
2. What are the main truths and insights I have learned through this course on Isaiah?
3. In what ways will this course help me in my personal Christian experience?
4. How will my service as a Christian disciple be improved as a result of this course?

Note: Except for the first question at least one page per question would be appropriate.

A 4D Instructor will evaluate your answers and determine whether or not you have demonstrated satisfactory learning, personal growth, and approach to ministry. If the instructor evaluates your answers as “satisfactory,” then a certificate of course completion will be sent to you. When you have successfully completed all ten courses in the Discipleship Program, then the Certificate in Discipleship Studies will be awarded.

