



MONDAY 18 DECEMBER 2017

SERIES: ISAIAH – THE MESSAGE OF THE MESSIAH

Read: Isaiah 13-14

Plug In...

Now a sweep-around the nations and their judgement pronounced (chaps. 13-23). The fate of the nations is a message delivered to Judah. Judah is to notice that God is King above all; above those Judah might fear.

Babylon gets lots of air-time. In the Bible, Babylon is the archetypal nation that arrogantly think and behave as if they are God.

Chew It Over...

Some say Isaiah 14 tells the story of Satan falling from heaven: he was beautiful but became proud. That interpretation says way more than any of the Bible's teaching on Satan's origins. Isaiah 13-14 are set on earth, set in history. They are about an historical Babylonian King. This King's arrogance is extreme. From *earth* he thinks he is like God in heaven and can take over and rule all. God pronounces his end!

His end is described like the "bright morning star" that vanishes quickly each morning (14:12). In season, Venus appears a couple of hours before the sun and then quickly disappears when the blazing sun arrives. A powerful metaphor.

[NB: The Hebrew word for 'star of the morning' translates to the Latin word *lucifer*, which means 'shining one'. In Roman times, the term 'lucifer' was applied to Venus in the sky; the brightest star yet disappears the quickest. The King James Version subbed in 'Lucifer' at Isaiah 14:2 and the term has been forever etched into our psyche.]

Scripture does attribute evil supernatural powers behind earthly politics (e.g. [Daniel 10:10-13](#); [Ephesians 6:10-12](#)). We should affirm this. However, the origin of Satan, and whether he was good turned bad, is simply not mentioned in Scripture. Scripture always portrays Satan as evil, always opposed to God. Even when permitted into the heavenly realm, Scripture depicts Satan accusing God's people and seeking to rule humanity on earth (e.g. [Job 1](#); [Revelation 12:7-13](#)).

In Jesus' ministry, we see He binds Satan and the demons that blind, then takes their possessions ([Luke 11:17-22](#)). On one occasion, this happens *en masse*. At that time, Jesus describes Satan's loss of grip as happening with the speed of a lightning flash ([Luke 10:17-20](#)). Jesus refers to Satan doing battle and losing. This is not talking about a speculated time when Satan was good then turned bad.

Prayer Suggestion

Thank God that Jesus released the grip of Satan upon us at the cross. Ask for help to believe that the gospel is the power of salvation to unlock those enslaved by Satan to darkness. May we use this God given weapon.



TUESDAY 19 DECEMBER 2017

SERIES: ISAIAH – THE MESSAGE OF THE MESSIAH

Read: Isaiah 15-16

Plug In...

Recapping what's happened so far. World politics are scaring Judah's King, Ahaz. God says trust that He is King of all the earth (chap. 6) and will punish Ephraim and Aram; He will punish Assyria who comes behind them (chaps. 7-11). All rulers will be replaced by a Davidic King that God installs for all nations – He's wise, compassionate, just, and righteous – so sing! (chaps. 11-12).

As the arrogance of each kingdom against God is exposed and put down, God promises those who wait on him that the oppressor will be replaced with a just and righteous King (16:5).

Chew It Over...

The history of politics is that every nation's government oversteps their call. They face situations and conclude that God's way won't succeed; God's execution of justice limits them. So, they become proud and abandon God. The result? People lose their rights, their property. People are oppressed and harassed (16:4). The result at the end of that? God removes them (16:6-7).

Like King Ahaz, we have powerful people, groups, maybe even government, come towards us and essentially say, leave God, join us, this is where you'll truly find safety and peace.

Two temptations emerge. (1) We leave God and join them. (2) We don't trust God's way and take matters to remove them into our own hands. Signs of this? Revenge, vigilante behaviour, arrogance, unforgiveness.

Whenever we feel that it is all up to us to do something, be careful. We are likely about to cross God's moral boundaries thinking we are recusing the situation for the greater good. Chuck Colson reflected this is the wrong thinking that led him to being willing to commit the Watergate crimes.

Think over where you are acting as if rescuing the situation all depends on you. Reflect on Paul's call to not take revenge and doing that in the context of being governed by governments who may or not approximate their calling ([Romans 12:19 – 13:10](#)).

Prayer Suggestion

Ask God to remind us to not take things God Himself said He'll do into our own hands. Pray that you'll live in the midst of corrupt governments and leaders, knowing God will bring them to account, that God will install Jesus as the worldwide leader in the future. Pray we will do our duty, love people, love enemies, and leave room for God's vengeance.



WEDNESDAY 20 DECEMBER 2017

SERIES: ISAIAH – THE MESSAGE OF THE MESSIAH

Read: Isaiah 17

Plug In...

We see that God is King over all from the vantage point of Judah. All the nations mentioned are neighbours to Judah. God starts off by mentioning all the real and concrete threats to Judah and telling Judah they will be stopped and dealt with.

In the middle of these named nations is a generic oracle to *any* nation (17:12-14).

Chew It Over...

God is more than local. He guarantees every nation will be brought before Him and justice will be served.

Can you single out the line in 17:12-14 that shows the basis on which God will bring their sudden terror? Connect this with the basis Jesus will judge the nations on ([Matthew 25:31-46](#)).

Prayer Suggestion

Lord help us to display our allegiance and love of you through how we treat your chosen people. Help us to spot the person at church in need and help.



THURSDAY 21 DECEMBER 2017

SERIES: ISAIAH – THE MESSAGE OF THE MESSIAH

Read: Isaiah 18-19

Plug In...

Cushites are from Sudan (north-east Africa, below Egypt).

The nations are condemned, but God will have mercy on them if they repent before the day of judgement. These two chapters show that people from outside of Judah will join the group that God saves and establishes in Zion (cf. [Isaiah 2:1-5](#)). This point is strikingly made with the statement that the one language of Hebrew will be spoken. It echoes a reversal of the result of Babel ([Genesis 11](#)).

Chew It Over...

The pattern of God? Yes, He will bring evil to justice. That includes anyone that plays a part in that rebellion against God and contributes to the world's evil. That means us too. Yet, before that day He promises mercy to those that repent before it is too late.

Listen again to 19:24-25: "In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the earth. The Lord Almighty will bless them, saying, 'Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance.'"

God's long term plan has been a multi-ethnic, diverse group, all called the people of God.

Prayer Suggestion

Thank God that Jesus restored the tribes of Israel and that we are included in that group to the ends of the earth. May we live a life that honours we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus.



FRIDAY 22 DECEMBER 2017

SERIES: ISAIAH – THE MESSAGE OF THE MESSIAH

Read: Isaiah 20-21

Plug In...

The list of nations and their condemnation becomes faster in pace. Cush, Egypt, Babylon, Dumah (Edom), Arabia. The summary statement: the LORD, the God of Israel has spoken. These things are future pronouncements, but King Ahaz and Judah need to recognise that God's word puts things into action, so it is guaranteed.

Chew It Over...

God speaks and things happen. Fearful King Ahaz and Judah need to live knowing that the Lord has spoken and what He has spoken will come to pass.

What you hear, what you listen to, affects you. Continually hear God's word, faith comes ([Romans 10:16-21](#)).

Ahaz would have heard a lot of voices. Who did he stop and spend time listening to? The opposite is true: unbelief comes from muting.

God holds word after word, promise after promise, blessing after blessing out to us. If we stop and listen to it, it will affect us.

Who do you spend most time listening to? How often do they ever mention God or Jesus? If they do, what do they say?

Take this to heart what you invest in listening to will lead you to either towards belief or unbelief. Only God's word leads to belief.

Prayer Suggestion

Ask Jesus to reveal to you who you really spend the bulk of the time listening to; from whose messages are you absorbing and being shaped by.



WEEKEND 23-24 DECEMBER 2017

SERIES: ISAIAH – THE MESSAGE OF THE MESSIAH

Read: Isaiah 22-23

Plug In...

The sweep of nations condemned included Judah and its focal point Jerusalem. They are no better than the nations. The final nation, Tyre, is described as a prostitute. Even Jerusalem has got to a state no better.

Just like the same mercy upon repentance that Judah has is offered to all the nations, in the same fashion, the same fate of the nations will be applied to Judah.

Chew It Over...

First was Babylon to be condemned. It is a long ? and they are an example of arrogance against God (chaps. 13-14). Last in the list is Tyre. They are an example of how money and sex are powerful lures away from God. Revelation calls the whole world “Babylon” and describes its behaviour like a prostitute.

The world is opposed to faith in God – Babylon!

The world will try to lure you away from God – Tyre!

Getting caught in the web is God’s people living by the mantra: “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!” (22:13).

As someone has said, *are you living for the End, or the just the weekend?* What we actually do on our weekend might actually reveal what we are caught up in.

Spend some time *this weekend* thinking about what is habitual about your weekends? How do they provide little pictures of what you hold as giving you most joy and hope? Do not bypass [Revelation 17-18](#) to help sober you up.

Prayer Suggestion

Repent. Give thanks to God that in Jesus the reality of Isaiah 23:18 comes true. God is able to redeem our filth, redeem our dirty money.