



Preaching Through The Bible, Michael Eaton

Isaiah

Part 34

The King of God's City (24:7-23)

• Describes suffering resulting from breaking of covenant

4. The breaking of God's 'statutes' leads to extreme misery

Isaiah is describing the chaos and suffering that will come upon the entire world because of the way in which men and women have 'transgressed the laws, altered the fixed statutes, broken the everlasting covenant'.

4. The breaking of God's 'statutes' leads to extreme misery.

*⁷The new wine dries up and the vine withers;
all those who are joyful of heart groan.
⁸The gaiety of the tambourines has ceased, the
noise of the revellers has stopped, the gaiety
of the harp has ceased.
⁹No longer do they drink wine with a song;
the beer is bitter to its drinkers.*

• The entire world is like a devastated city

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*¹⁰The city of emptiness is broken down;
the entrance to every house is barred.
¹¹In the streets they cry out for wine;
all joy has reached its sunset,
the gaiety of the earth has gone into captivity.
¹²In the city there is only ruin,
its gate is battered to pieces.*

• Earth is vulnerable to sin

When the gates of a city are battered and broken it is vulnerable to enemies. The entire planet earth is vulnerable to sin and Satan, distress and disaster. Just when the world thinks it is bringing life under control, yet another disaster smashes its hopes.

5. In the chaos of this world there is hope only for those who will give glory to God

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*¹³For this is how it will be on the earth
and among the peoples,
as at the beating of an olive tree,
or as when gleanings are left after the
grape harvest is finished.
¹⁴These are the ones who raise their voices,
they shout aloud;
from the west they praise Yahweh's majesty.
¹⁵Therefore in the east give glory to Yahweh;
exalt the name of Yahweh, the God of Israel,
in the islands of the sea.
¹⁶From the ends of the earth we hear singing:
'Glory to the Righteous One.'*

• There is hope for those who give glory to God

6. There is hope for those who are distressed at what is happening and who break away from it

In the ancient world when a crop was harvested and collected some gleanings would be left aside. Isaiah has some hope that in his day there will some 'gleanings', some people who will turn away from the chaos and give glory to God. The only way to be an exception to the worldwide judgement – says Isaiah – is to give glory to God. If there are a people who will give glory to God in the east, in the west (where 'the islands' are to be found in the Mediterranean) – everywhere – then there is hope.

6. There is hope for those who are distressed at what is happening and who break away from it. Isaiah himself is in distress. Not many people are turning to give God glory in his time. Isaiah gives his own personal reaction to what is happening in his own day¹.

*But I said, 'I waste away, I waste away!
Woe to me!'*

• Sins and sinners betray us – they offer what they cannot give

Sin and sinners betray us. Isaiah puts it very vividly:

*'For betrayers betray.
With betrayal betrayers betray.'*

Sin and sinners promise us great things but then they betray us. We have already seen a complaint by the Babylonians that the Assyrians are betrayers¹². But the Babylonians are betrayers as well! The truth is: all sin and all sinners turn out to be offering us what they cannot give. In the end they betray us. Isaiah is distressed at the horror of it.

21:2

*¹⁷Terror and pit and trap await you,
O inhabitant of the earth.
¹⁸Whoever flees at the sound of terror
will fall into a pit;
whoever climbs out of the pit
will be caught in a snare.*

• The judgement of the world is inescapable

The judgement of the world is entirely inescapable. You run from terror; you fall into a pit. You climb out of the pit. You get caught in a trap. There is nowhere to run to. The world is certainly and inescapably destined to come under God's judgement. Isaiah sees it in vision.

*The windows of the heavens are opened,
the foundations of the earth shake.
¹⁹The earth is totally broken down,
the earth is utterly shattered,
the earth is thoroughly shaken.
²⁰The earth reels like a drunkard,
it sways like a hut in the wind;
so heavy upon it is its rebellion
that it falls – never to rise again.*

Answer to the chaos and horror – the coming of God's King

The answer to the chaos and horror that Isaiah has mentioned is the coming of God's King. In the undated future Isaiah sees disaster for the entire planet. But he sees something else also.

1. He sees a day when all God's enemies will be defeated.

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*²¹In that day Yahweh will punish the
powers in the heavens on high and
the kings on the earth below.
²²They will be herded together, prisoners
bound ready for the dungeon; they
will be shut up in prison and will be
punished for many days.*

• A restraint on spiritual powers and political forces

There will come a restraint upon spiritual powers ('the powers in the heavens on high') and upon political forces that wish to crush Israel ('the kings on the earth below'). God's glory will appear in such a way that even the very sun and moon will be embarrassed.

2. God's Saviour-King will come to Jerusalem

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*²³The moon will be abashed, the sun
ashamed; for Yahweh Almighty will reign
on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and
before its elders there will be glory.*

(i) God comes
in His divine Messiah

(ii) He does His work
in Jerusalem

(iii) Eventually there
will be a new
Jerusalem full of the
glory of God

Isaiah does not yet work out in detail what the prediction of God's King will involve. But he tells us a little. (i) **God comes in his divine Messiah.** We already know from Isaiah of a miracle-child born of a virgin, One who is called the Mighty God. The Christian knows him as our Lord Jesus Christ, the Wonderful Counsellor, the Prince of Peace. (ii) **He does his work in Jerusalem.** Jesus died in Jerusalem. Jesus rose again in Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit was poured out upon the church in Jerusalem. The reaching of the world with good news began when men and women went out from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. (iii) **Eventually there will be a new Jerusalem full of the glory of God.** 'Before its elders there will be glory.' The idea here is that there will be a new Jerusalem altogether. In the new Jerusalem all will be elders – leaders and rulers and conquerors. The entire 'new Jerusalem' will share the glory of God. The environment will be healed. A new heavens and new earth will come.