

The Holy One Of Israel

Isaiah's message was delivered seven hundred years before the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. The prophecy's principle purpose was to confirm Immanuel's coming and supply details of what His incarnation would accomplish and provide. This series of 'burdens' served to reassure the Lord's elect when their faith in God was tried. Distressing days were coming yet none of the national calamities Isaiah foresaw would hinder God's covenant promise of grace and glory in Christ.

A bigger bully

The ancient city of Damascus was to be destroyed. Syria and Israel once bullied Judah, now Assyria, a bigger bully, tormented them all. Their respective capitals Damascus, Samaria and Jerusalem would all feel the pressure of Nineveh. The first two would be destroyed, Isaiah tells us, but Jerusalem, though weakened, would not fall. In addition, a remnant of faithful believers, God's elect, would be preserved. They would be few, as few as grapes remaining after harvest and olives left on high branches.

For Christ's sake

Jerusalem's deliverance was fulfilled when Sennacherib besieged the city in the days of Hezekiah. His marching army is likened to the rush and noise of mighty waters. However, Sennacherib failed to take the city. His army was destroyed in one night by the angel of the Lord who passed through the camp and slew one hundred and eighty-five thousand troops (2 King 19:35). The Lord had said, 'I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake'.

Thin but not extinct

Yet, 'the glory of Jacob shall be made thin'. The reference to Jacob reminded the people of Judah and of the ten tribes of Israel of their common, Abrahamic heritage. God would not forget the promises made to Jacob, even if for a time they were hid from view. Being 'made thin' speaks of judgment for the sin of forgetting God and turning to idols. Despite this the God of salvation, the rock of their strength, would remain faithful. Shiloh, the promised Messiah, must come.

Look to your Maker

Isaiah repeats the phrase 'in that day' which we have come to understand to mean the gospel day, especially the age begun by the life and atoning death of Jesus Christ. Here the prophet tells the elect their Lord and Saviour shall be made incarnate and be viewed not only with the eye of faith but actually seen as the Godman, 'At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel'.

Turn from your works

Also, says the prophet, in that day the Lord's people and citizens of Christ's spiritual kingdom, 'shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands, neither shall respect that which his fingers have made'. Why? Because the Lord's people live by faith, not by sight and not by works. In that day they shall glory in the work of Christ. They shall live by the death of Christ and trust in the free grace of God in Christ. They shall live by faith in the finished work of His great salvation.

Ordered and sure

Isaiah encouraged the remnant of Israel to trust in God despite all their troubles. God's Messiah would come and His spiritual kingdom would prosper. The mighty army of Assyria tried to wipe out little Judah but it would not succeed and the Lord's Christ would be revealed for the consolation of Israel. God is faithful. A people were preserved, an elect remnant were delivered and returned from exile. From this remnant Christ was born of the house of David as God had said.

Christ is for us!

It may seem in our own day that the powers of this world; military, political or religious, could soon overwhelm Christ's people or quench the gospel ministry or corrupt the testimony of free-grace preaching. Some fear it has already happened. Take heart believer! Trust in the Lord! Maybe you feel like the last grape on the vine, the final olive on the

tree. Do not be afraid, Isaiah's 'behold' still stands. Christ's kingdom shall never fail. His people will be gathered and preserved. The gospel shall not return void.

The Holy One of Israel

We are confident in this gospel because we are confident in the One whose gospel it is. When a person is enabled to believe by God's Holy Spirit and called to faith by God's sovereign grace, that one shall look to his Maker, his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel, and salvation shall be experienced. Our Saviour is no failure. He has accomplished all He came to do and having supplied everything needful for the deliverance of His people He shall save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.

Amen

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