

Lucifer, Son Of The Morning

Isaiah re-affirms God's plan of salvation for His chosen ones. Let us note the kindness and gentleness of the Lord toward His weak, weary people. He knows what we can bear. He is sensitive to our needs. Because the Lord knew what Judah must endure in captivity He upheld and sustained His bruised children with promises of mercy and, in due time, rest from sorrow, fear and bondage. The Lord will have mercy on Jacob, He will remember Israel.

Purpose in pain

Trials are necessary to mortify our flesh, humble our pride and shake our self-confidence. An easy life is an unproductive life, certainly in spiritual matters. In our need the Saviour proves His love for us and cultivates our growth in grace. It is God's will that His sanctified people endure hardship in this sinful world, yet our heavenly Father sweetens our trials with helps along the way so we do not become discouraged. God's love lightens dark days and relieves heavy burdens.

Hope and comfort

For the remnant of Judah and Israel the Babylonian captivity was a crushing period. It lasted seventy years. Some would experience the harsh disruption from the start. Some would be born and die in exile and know nothing but pain and hard labour. Some would live to see God's promises fulfilled and freedom granted under Cyrus. The Lord will not forget mercy. Judah will be free, Israel will return home, Messiah will come, and divine promises received by faith will bring hope until all be fulfilled.

God will work a work

Isaiah delivers a proverb or parable concerning Babylon's destruction and particularly the proud King of Babylon is singled out as an object of scorn and sarcasm. All the time Israel was smarting under Babylon's oppression the faithful remnant would remember God's plan. The days of the pompous king and his golden city were numbered. The Medes were the hammer but it would be wielded by God, 'The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers'.

When hell moves

The king of Babylon was a vicious man who ruled in anger and smote his enemies in wrath. He was a destroyer feared by the kings and nations of the earth. Isaiah says his demise will be a cause for singing, even the trees of the forest shall rejoice! The prophet's language and imagery is extraordinary. He speaks of hell moving to meet this man, of dead kings rising in mock respect to offer him their thrones – or their graves, of jeering in the realm of the dead that such a one, having swapped a bed of luxury for a bed of worms, is now amongst them.

Lucifer

The description given of Lucifer has caused some to apply these words to Satan as describing his fall from heaven. No doubt there are similarities. The devil was once among the bright creatures of heaven until he was lifted up by pride and cast out. The name Lucifer has stuck to the devil but it is the king of Babylon who is intended in the passage. We are taught an important truth. Grim as death will be, physical death is not the end. Hell opens its mouth to consume all who leave this life without a door of access into heaven.

A warning to sinners

There is much to dread about hell by what is said of the Babylonian king's entering into that house of the damned. Isaiah's words must have made the people of Judah shudder to imagine this descent into the pit but this imagery is a warning to us all. These disembodied souls were conscious of their existence and knew one another in this pit of hell. They could think, move, act, speak and understand the effects of their loss and weakness. What a terrible place hell will be. What a timely warning this is to all sinners to flee to Christ from the wrath to come.

Spiritual pride and anti-Christ

It seems clear there was a religious element to Babylon's wickedness and a spiritual component to the king's ambition.

He wanted to make himself a god. This same pride snared Adam and Eve in the garden and prompted Nimrod to build Babel. It is the foundation of all man-made religion for which reason Babylon is used as a synonym in Revelation not for the church of Rome alone but all anti-Christ religious activity.

A verse to remember

Isaiah reminds the Lord's people that God's promises are firm, His salvation is sure, His covenant shall stand and those who trust Him will prevail. The Messiah will redeem His people from their sins and give them peace and glory. One of scripture's finest proofs of God's sovereignty in salvation is found right here in this chapter.

Isaiah writes, 'The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand'. This prophecy reassured the Old Testament remnant as they waited for 'Christ, and the glory that should follow'. It is for our help, too, as we await 'the restitution of all things' and the glory that will follow.

Amen

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