

Christ Our Hiding Place

Once again we are bound to confess the majesty and beauty of Isaiah's vision of the Messiah and the spiritual clarity with which he discerned Christ's coming and His gospel kingdom. We remember that these prophecies were intended both as a warning of coming judgment and a promise of grace and salvation. Isaiah rebuked Judah and Israel for their wickedness but also re-enforced the longstanding Messianic prophecies. Despite imminent national calamity a remnant would be saved out of which the Messiah would come for the saving of His people.

Behold, a king

The opening 'Behold' draws special attention to the promise of the coming king. This is King Jesus. Only our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ can satisfy and fulfil the accomplishments described. Earthly kings, such as Hezekiah who will feature in coming chapters, are only types of the true King of kings who reigns in holiness and righteousness over the kingdom of His saints. Christ's princes are the apostles and ministers of the gospel who are set over churches in the Lord and rule well in judgment when they rule according to the word of God and preach the gospel of free and sovereign grace.

Every need supplied

So, too, the 'man' spoken of is Christ incarnate who while truly God is also truly man. In His humanity our Lord Jesus provided for every spiritual need of His people by His death as their Substitute. The Saviour proved to be a shelter and hiding place for sinners from the attacks of all their enemies. He who came down to the cross to fight for His people also hides, covers, and refreshes them in this wilderness world, preserving them in safety along their pilgrim journey.

Spiritual conversion

Isaiah turns his attention to the spiritual effect of Christ's righteous reign in this world and the fruit of effectual preaching in the gospel age. Many will see and hear the word of truth with quickened understanding and spiritual conviction. They will hear it thoughtfully and it will convert men and women who once were careless and heedless of their soul's perilous state. They will receive it as 'the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe'. It will result in confession of sin and true faith in Jesus Christ.

Spiritual discernment

A second consequence of Christ's gospel rule and true preaching will be the exposure of empty religion and the rejection of false doctrine. This occurred when the apostles preached to the religious Jews on the day of Pentecost and thereafter throughout their ministries. It is realised when the Spirit of Truth creates a hunger and thirst in the soul of a sinner that cannot be satisfied by man's self-righteous deeds or the religious aspirations of the human will.

Spiritual separation

True faith will make of men and women what they never could make of themselves. It issues forth in true doctrine, true service and true fellowship. The vile self-serving villain will be exposed. The churl, or miserly self-promoter in religion, will be recognised as the opportunist he is. Those who truly stand for truth, preach faithfully and bring the word of God liberally to needy sinners will be honoured by the Lord and His people for the work they do.

A call to rise and hear

Isaiah called on the people of his day to hear his words and repent. He directs his words to women at ease and careless women. Perhaps it is a reference to effeminate men or implies only women will be left to serve their persecutors as slaves, the men having been slain. The pictures of devastation reflect the certainty of judgment to come leaving Isaiah's listeners without excuse. Barrenness, thorns and wild asses will fill the land left desolate by enemies. Yet, even now, by calling upon the women to rise up and hear his voice, Isaiah expresses God's grace by calling for repentance and faith.

A promise of peace with God

The contrast between those who trust the Lord and those who will not, is stark. It is Christ in righteousness who works salvation and Isaiah declares, 'The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting

places.' These are gospel promises for believers in Jesus Christ. Peace with God, a quiet conscience cleansed by precious blood together with assurance implanted by the Holy Ghost shall be the portion of grace in the hearts and lives of God's elect.

Amen

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