

In Quietness And Confidence

This chapter speaks of God's displeasure toward Jews who turned to Egypt for help during the Assyrian campaign. Isaiah called the people of Judah and Jerusalem to trust the Lord but rather than retain a confidence in the Lord and seek a covering under God's spiritual protection they placed their hope in men and in the flesh. Instead of resting in God their Saviour they tried to forge alliances and buy deliverance using their worldly wealth.

Help from an old enemy?

The princes and leaders of Judah sent ambassadors to Zoan and Hanes, cities in Egypt, to solicit Pharaoh's help. As Sennacherib advanced from the north the wealthy took their riches and fled south on donkeys and camels to hide in Egypt. Isaiah labels this distrust of God 'vain' and 'shameful'. They add sin to sin. Rather than resting upon the Lord and trusting Him to deliver them they try to deliver themselves. They neither trust God's word nor listen to His messengers.

Write this down

The Lord calls Isaiah publicly to record His anger against Judah and write it in a book that their condemnation be preserved for ever. Though they claimed to be true children of God they were, in reality, lying children, full of deceit and rebellious. They maintained an outward pretence of religion but it was merely a veneer. They wanted religion on their own terms, a man-centred religion to satisfy their desires and excuse their disobedience. They pushed aside God's prophets who faithfully declared God's name and replaced them with smooth talking imposters who told them what they wanted to hear.

'The Holy One of Israel'

Therefore, as a true prophet should, Isaiah declares God's name more emphatically, confronting and contradicting the hypocrisy of these men whose destruction was imminent. Isaiah gives a picture of a useless broken pot and a high wall bowing under its own weight that falls suddenly. God set the way of salvation before these will-worshippers, showing them where true strength, quietness and confidence was to be found but they would have none of it. They pursued their own way of salvation and despised the truth.

Until a remnant shall be left

Yet the Lord does not altogether cast off this people. A few will be preserved and a remnant remain, like a beacon on a mountain or a flag on a hill. The Lord will wait patiently to be gracious, by which He shall also be exalted. Now follows a series of gospel prophecies in which the Lord pledges mercy, grace and peace to those who trust Him, wait for Him and call upon His name. It is Christ who will be exalted, as He was upon the cross where justice was satisfied and mercy performed, then further exalted in resurrection and glory.

God enables His elect

These blessed people are God's elect, blessed to wait upon the Lord by faith, blessed to be preserved through adversity and affliction. The blessed people are supplied with apostles and teachers who point them to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Way of Life, and guide them in the straight paths of righteousness. They will dwell in Zion, the church of Jesus Christ, and will enjoy the benefits of Christ's presence, who hears and answers prayers.

Light beyond the sun and moon

Yet there is more, in these gospel days there will be given spiritual rain to refresh the ground from which will spring spiritual fruit. Preaching will prosper and the gospel will bring about a plentiful gathering-in of harvest. In that day, says Isaiah, rivers and streams will flow from Jerusalem, as witnessed in the apostolic age and thereafter from Zion, the church. The bright light of gospel preaching will illuminate the whole earth.

God's anger unleashed

The closing verses of this chapter are a fierce representation of the destruction of Assyria, the one-time tool in God's hand. However, they speak also of the overthrow of Satan and the destruction of his kingdom when the Lord shall spoil his house and gather from it the objects of His love as trophies of His grace. There is a diminishing of Satan and a

magnifying of Christ every time a sinner is converted and brought to a knowledge of the truth. There is joy in heaven amongst the angels and gratitude and praise in the church for each wandering child brought home.

Final judgment

We also see in Isaiah's words a glimpse of the day when the Lord will come in final judgment upon the wicked. Then He will separate His church from those doomed to hell. Today, many speak of peace where there is no peace. Let it be understood, the return of the Lord Jesus will be with burning anger upon all who know Him not. He comes with lips full of indignation; His tongue a devouring fire. Tophet is a picture of hell; deep and large, fuelled for its purpose and filled with brimstone where the damned shall be cast and the reprobate consumed in everlasting fire.

Amen

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