



KINGDOM PROPHET

Forty Daily Devotions
from the Book of Isaiah
Chapters 1-35
(Based on the NKJV)

Introduction

Isaiah has often been referred to as “The Prince of Prophets!” His name means “the Lord saves,” and that is exactly the message he preached. Beyond the fact that he was “the son of Amoz” (1:1), we know truly little about this great preacher’s past or childhood. However, we can be sure that he was proud of his roots because we see the phrase “the son of Amoz” repeatedly (seven times) throughout the book. Beyond the book that bears his name, we can also read about the ministry of Isaiah in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles.

His ministry began in earnest in the same year that King Uzziah died (6:1), and he preached during the same times as men like Amos, Hosea, and Micah. Most of what we know about Isaiah comes from some personal, biographical information that he included in his writings. From his own book, we learn that he had at least two sons. One was named Shear-Jashub (7:3) and the other Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz (8:3). If you wonder why Isaiah would give his son such a name, you can read Isaiah 8:3 where Isaiah explained, “The LORD *said to me*, ‘Call his name Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz’”!

If you do some extra reading about the Book of Isaiah, you might discover that there are some who believe he wrote only the first portion of the book. However, there are several reasons to be fully convinced that the entire book was written by Isaiah, but perhaps in two separate phases. The first portion might have been written in his younger years while the second might have been written in his later years as he looked back on his life and ministry. The strongest argument for Isaiah’s authorship is found in the title by which he repeatedly addressed the LORD – “The Holy One of Israel.” Beginning at Isaiah 1:4 through Isaiah 60:14, you should be able to find that phrase over 20 times throughout the book. You will also find that phrase once in 2 Kings 19:22, but a careful look will reveal that it is Isaiah who refers to God by that title in that story. Other than in two places in Jeremiah (50:29 and 51:5) and three places in the Psalms (71:22; 78:41; 89:18), you will find no record of anyone else addressing God by that name. Since this title for God seems to be a trademark of Isaiah, and since it occurs regularly throughout the entire book, I am convinced that Isaiah was the author of all the wonderful chapters that we will read over the next two 40-day periods.

Daily Reading Schedule

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
1	Isaiah 1:1-17	03/28/24
2	Isaiah 1:18-31	03/29/24
3	Isaiah 2:1-22	03/30/24
4	Isaiah 3:1-26	03/31/24
5	Isaiah 4:1-5:12	04/01/24
6	Isaiah 5:13-30	04/02/24
7	Isaiah 6:1-13	04/03/24
8	Isaiah 7:1-9	04/04/24
9	Isaiah 7:10-25	04/05/24
10	Isaiah 8:1-22	04/06/24
11	Isaiah 9:1-21	04/07/24
12	Isaiah 10:1-14	04/08/24
13	Isaiah 10:15-34	04/09/24
14	Isaiah 11:1-16	04/10/24
15	Isaiah 12:1-13:8	04/11/24
16	Isaiah 13:9-22	04/12/24
17	Isaiah 14:1-15	04/13/24
18	Isaiah 14:16-32	04/14/24
19	Isaiah 15:1-9	04/15/24
20	Isaiah 16:1-13	04/16/24

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
21	Isaiah 17:1-14	04/17/24
22	Isaiah 18:1-19:10	04/18/24
23	Isaiah 19:11-25	04/19/24
24	Isaiah 20:1-21:17	04/20/24
25	Isaiah 22:1-25	04/21/24
26	Isaiah 23:1-18	04/22/24
27	Isaiah 24:1-23	04/23/24
28	Isaiah 25:1-26:6	04/24/24
29	Isaiah 26:7-21	04/25/24
30	Isaiah 27:1-13	04/26/24
31	Isaiah 28:1-13	04/27/24
32	Isaiah 28:14-29	04/28/24
33	Isaiah 29:1-24	04/29/24
34	Isaiah 30:1-17	04/30/24
35	Isaiah 30:18-33	05/01/24
36	Isaiah 31:1-32:4	05/02/24
37	Isaiah 32:5-20	05/03/24
38	Isaiah 33:1-24	05/04/24
39	Isaiah 34:1-17	05/05/24
40	Isaiah 35:1-10	05/06/24

Day 1: Isaiah 1:1-17

“The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.” (Isaiah 1:1)

There is no better place to begin than at the beginning. In the beginning of the book that bears his name, we read about Isaiah’s beginnings. He declared himself to be “the son of Amoz.” That is a good phrase to watch for as you read this book, because you will see that Isaiah repeatedly referred to himself by that title. Traditionally, when the name of a prophet’s father was given, it generally meant the father was also a prophet. Many of the traditional rabbinical teachings stated that Amoz was himself a prophet, and some state that he was the brother of Amaziah King of Judah. However, since Amoz is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible, all that we really know about him is just what we are here, and in several other places, told by Isaiah. Besides the seven times that Isaiah refers to himself as “the son of Amoz” in his own book, we will also find him referred to in that way three times in 2 Kings (19:2; 19:20; 20:1) and then three more times in 2 Chronicles (26:22; 32:20; 32:32). One thing seems certain – Isaiah was proud of his heritage, and he was proud of his father! As you read this book, you will also see that Isaiah was proud of his Heavenly Father and he repeats His name repeatedly as well. Watch for the phrase “the Holy One of Israel” as you read this book. You will first find it in today’s reading (1:4), and you will last see it near the end of the book (60:14). Other than two places in Jeremiah and three places in the Psalms, this phrase and title for God was unique to Isaiah.

Prayer Emphasis: Commit to the daily reading program and **be faithful** to spend time with God’s Word every day. **Watch** for the phrase and title “the Holy One of Israel” and ask God to reveal Himself to you in that way as you read this wonderful book of the Bible.

Day 2: Isaiah 1:18-31

“‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ says the LORD, ‘Though your sins be like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.’” (Isaiah 1:18)

Yesterday, we read about Isaiah’s “vision” (1:1). That word implies that God clearly revealed some things to Isaiah about Judah’s relationship to Him. God showed Isaiah that His people were still observing Holy Days and making the appropriate offerings to Him, but those token gestures were not acceptable to Him because the hearts of the people were distant, and the lives of the people lacked true devotion. God showed Isaiah that the people were simply going through the motions and repeating religious exercises before Him while their hearts remained far from Him. In verse 16, God declared such actions, however religious they might have been, to be “evil.” He then commanded them to “cease to do evil” (v. 16) and to “learn to do good” (v. 17). But before the people were to continue bringing offerings in their *hands*, God wanted them to do something about their *hearts*. So He invited them to “Come” and to “reason together” with Him so their relationship with Him could be truly and fully restored. His invitation was about *presence*. The people were to “come” – not to just an altar or temple – but to *Him*. They had been approaching places of worship and altars, but they had somehow forgotten that they were really supposed to be approaching Him. But there is a little more to see from today’s focus verse beyond an invitation to experience God’s presence. In these words, we see that God’s invitation was also about the *present* for He said, “Come *now*, and let us reason together.”

Prayer Emphasis: Realize that there is no better time than “now” to **examine** your own heart and **confess** any lack of devotion that has infiltrated your religious activities. **Believe** that God is always ready to restore His people when they come to Him seeking His divine forgiveness.

Day 3: Isaiah 2:1-22

“O house of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of the LORD.” (Isaiah 2:5)

In Isaiah 1:1, we read about the “*vision*” that God revealed to Isaiah while in the first verse of chapter two we read about the “*word* that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.” Although two different words are used to express the “*vision*” and the “*word*” that God gave Isaiah, both are said to be something that Isaiah “*saw*.” There is one thing that every believer can be sure of and that is the fact that God can clearly and completely reveal His will to His servants in a way that will enable them to clearly “*see*” His heavenly will for their earthly lives! While chapter two mainly deals with the “*latter days*” (v. 2) when God would establish His kingdom on earth, it also contains some particularly good advice for how He would have His children live here while they are awaiting the hereafter! Our focus verse contains some of that good advice. Once again, we see God’s people confronted with an invitation. In Isaiah 1:18, it was an invitation to “*come*” and *worship*. In today’s Scripture, we now see an invitation to “*come and...walk in the light of the LORD*.” It is important to notice the order of those invitations. It is imperative that our personal *worship* be what it should be if our personal *walk* is going to be what it should be. Worship is one of the ways God empowers and enables His people to walk for Him. God’s invitation for His people to “*walk in the light of the LORD*” was an invitation for them to start living now like they would someday live when He established His kingdom on earth. God still invites His followers to live in a heavenly-minded way while they abide here on earth. Jesus taught us to pray, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

Prayer Emphasis: Refuse to wait until you are in heaven to become heavenly minded! **Dedicate** your life to heavenly activities that honor and glorify God on a daily basis. **Ask God** to show you how you can do His will “on earth as it is in heaven.” That will help us make this world a much better place to be!

Day 4: Isaiah 3:1-26

“For behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, takes away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stock and the store, the whole supply of bread and the whole supply of water; ...” (Isaiah 3:1)

In Isaiah 3:1, we have a very good example of how two different words that are translated “*Lord*” are used in the Bible. The first “*Lord*” that we see in our focus verse is translated from a Hebrew word that can mean something like “*master*” or “*owner*.” When it is used in reference to a human “*master*,” it always begins with the lower case “*l*.” When it is used to refer to God, the “*Master*” and “*Owner*” of all creation, it always begins with the upper case, or capital, “*L*.” The second “*LORD*” that we see in Isaiah 3:1 is translated from the Hebrew word Jehovah (Yahweh), and it is always spelled with all capital letters. Isaiah uses both names here to emphasize an especially critical point to God’s people. The God that they were supposed to be serving was the “*Master God*” – the God of GODS! In the same sentence, Isaiah referred to the God of Gods as the “*LORD of hosts*.” That phrase is first found in 1 Samuel 1:3 and is then found, in slightly varied forms, over 250 times in the Old Testament. We have already seen this impressive title for God once in Isaiah (1:24) and now again here in 3:1. Beyond that, we will see it ten more times in the remaining chapters of the book. Every time you see it, stop, and thank God that the “*Master GOD*” is interested in the daily affairs of our lives.

Prayer Emphasis: Read Isaiah 3:8 once more and make note of what it was that caused God’s people to “*stumble*.” **Strive** to live your life in such a way that what you say (“*tongue*”) and what you do (“*doings*”) cast a positive reflection on God. **Refuse** to live a life that requires God to withhold His absolute best from you, your family, or your nation.

Day 5: Isaiah 4:1-5:12

“Now let me sing to my Well-beloved a song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: My Well-beloved has a vineyard on a very fruitful hill. He dug it up and cleared out its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, and also made a winepress in it; so He expected it to bring forth good grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes.” (Isaiah 5:1-2)

In this sermon, Isaiah is using a story in a similar way that Christ used parables in the New Testament. He tells the story of a landowner who planted a vineyard with the expectation that it would produce good grapes. It is clear that he fully expected to harvest good fruit from his vineyard because He had built a winepress and placed it in that vineyard. However, the vineyard did not produce “good grapes.” Instead “it brought forth wild grapes” (5:2). The vintner, who represents God in this story, later asked two very important questions: “What more could have been done to My vineyard that I have not done in it?” and “Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes did it bring forth wild grapes?” (5:4). The owner had every reason to expect a profitable crop of good grapes from His vineyard. It was well *situated*: “On a very fruitful hill.” It was well *serviced*: “He dug it up and cleared out its stones.” It was well *stocked*: He “planted it with the choicest vine.” Yet, when it came time to harvest and taste the grapes, He was, no doubt, sorely disappointed with what He found. The saddest thing about these “wild grapes” was that their appearance was identical to that of the good grapes. The difference could not be noted by the eye (what was on the outside) but was clearly noted in the taste (what was on the inside). Isaiah is using the story to tell Israel that God expected much better from them in return for all the good things He had done for them.

Prayer Emphasis: **Believe** that God still expects His children to bring forth good fruit. **Realize** that He does not want us to simply *look* like good Christians but to *be* good Christians! **Ask** yourself this question: “Does God have the right to expect my best for Him?” I believe that He does!

Day 6: Isaiah 5:13-30

“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” (Isaiah 5:20-21)

Depending on the translation from which you are reading, you may find the word “Woe” as many as 21 times as you read the Book of Isaiah. You will find it six times here in chapter five alone! But Isaiah’s pronouncing of “Woes” began back in the ninth and eleventh verses of chapter three. From there, he continued pronouncing woes on several types of people, including those mentioned in today’s focus verses. Other than for one place in Ruth and another in 1 Kings, every time the Hebrew word that is translated “woe” here is found in the Bible, it is found in one of the books of the prophets. Among those prophets, Isaiah used it the most often with his usages of “woe” making up almost one-half of the total number of times it was ever spoken! In today’s focus verses, Isaiah was condemning some of those “wild grapes” that found their way into God’s vineyard! These were people who attempted to eliminate the difference between right and wrong and “good and evil.” In fact, they had gone as far as to “call evil good” and then to call some good things “evil.” These were people who had decided that they could interpret God’s words and commands and determine which ones applied to them and which ones didn’t. As such, they relied on their own wisdom over the wisdom of God.

Prayer Emphasis: **Say**, “whoa!” to the kind of things that caused God to say “woe!” **Allow** God’s Word to be the final say on what is good and evil and **trust** in God’s wisdom above your own!

Day 7: Isaiah 6:1-13

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of his robe filled the temple...So I said: ‘Woe is me...I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.’” (Isaiah 6:1 & 5)

Some consider chapter six as the record of Isaiah’s calling. However, since he was already seeing “visions” (1:1) and hearing and pronouncing “the word” of God (2:1), it is clear that he was already a prophet. So, today’s chapter does not describe Isaiah’s *calling* but his *commissioning* to deliver messages to God’s people. Like many Christians today, Isaiah’s surrender to God’s purpose for his life was preceded by a traumatic experience. His beloved king, Uzziah, had been smitten with leprosy because he tried to assume and perform duties that God assigned only to the priest (2 Chronicles 26:16-19). The “year” that is mentioned in Isaiah 6:1 is probably a reference to the final year of Uzziah’s life and the impression that the king’s plague and suffering made on those who loved him. In the absence of his earthly king, Isaiah finally took his eyes off man and saw his heavenly King! When he saw the King of heaven, he finally saw himself as the fallen man that he was and surrendered his life to taking God’s Word to his nation. When he compared himself to the One who sits on the throne in heaven, Isaiah cried out, “Woe is me...I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips” (6:5). If you review all the “woes” that Isaiah pronounced up to this point, you will see that he only focused on the sins and failures of others. But now, he could clearly see that he had been no different from them because he readily admitted that he dwelled “in the midst” of them. In other words, he said that they had done evil, and he had been right in the middle of it!

Prayer Emphasis: **Refuse** to believe that you are better than others and that you have been given license to criticize and condemn. **Compare** yourself only to the Lord and you will soon confess that “there is none righteous, no, not one” and that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:10 & 23).

Day 8: Isaiah 7:1-9

“Now it came to pass in the days of Ahaz...his heart and the heart of his people were moved as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind.” (Isaiah 7:1a & 2b)

The section of Scripture that includes Isaiah chapters 7-39 details some dark and desperate times in the lives of God’s people. In a time of great conflict and opposition, they chose to turn to other nations for help rather than looking only to God as their defense and Deliverer. This section begins with King Ahaz and his failure to place his complete trust in God and ends with King Hezekiah (chapter 39) who continued down that same path of faithless destruction. Here, in the beginning of this long, sad story, Ahaz becomes an example of what happens to believers who place their confidence in man over God. 2 Kings 16:10-18 tells the awful story of how King Ahaz introduced the worship of his new allies’ gods to the temple worship of God’s people. As a result of this sacrilege, God allowed “Pekah” and his invading army to kill “one hundred and twenty thousand in Judah in one day, all valiant men, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers” (2 Chronicles 28:6). Besides that slaughter, that army also “carried away a great multitude of them as captives” (2 Chronicles 28:5). When God’s people look to anyone other than the Holy God of Israel for protection and deliverance, they do so because their “hearts” are moving back and forth, from one place to another, like “trees of the woods are moved with the wind” (v. 2).

Prayer Emphasis: **Look** first and fully to God as your source of provision and protection. **Refuse** to make alliances with others that might move you away from your steadfast faith in God. **Realize** that your actions have profound influence on those who look to you for leadership and direction.

Day 9: Isaiah 7:10-25

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14)

Although today’s focus verse is one that is familiar to many Christians, I dare say that many of those Christians are not fully aware of the context in which this blessed promise was given. In verses 10-11, we are told “the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying, ‘Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God.’” In response, Ahaz replied, “I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD” (v. 12). Now, at first, that response sounds like Ahaz was being a man of great faith and integrity. However, it is never a sin to “test” God when He has granted you permission to do so! The Christian world is full of people who are willfully disobeying God’s commands and doing a good job, like Ahaz, of sounding very spiritual as they do so! I know of one place in the Bible where God specifically asked every believer to “test” Him. In Malachi 3:10, God said, “Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try (test) Me now in this, says the LORD of hosts” and see “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.” Even though Ahaz piously refused to ask for a sign, God gave him one anyway! That sign was the miraculous coming of One who would ultimately deliver all men from the bondage and devastating power of sin. Have you “tested” the waters of personal salvation? If you have not, today would be an excellent day to do so!

Prayer Emphasis: *Test* God’s sign of His only begotten Son and you will soon *taste* the sweet salvation that only faith in Jesus Christ can bring to your heart and soul. **Believe** that, when it comes to salvation through Christ Jesus, God is making you an offer that you simply cannot afford to refuse!

Day 10: Isaiah 8:1-22

“Then I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the LORD said to me, ‘Call his name Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz...’” (Isaiah 8:3)

Some people are well intentioned but misinformed! Such is the case with Bible scholars (so called) who try to tell us that the child spoken of in this verse came in fulfillment of the prophecy that was spoken by Isaiah when he said, “Therefore the LORD Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14). There are several reasons why we can be sure that the son referenced in today’s focus verse is not the same child who’s coming was announced earlier. The most obvious is found in the fact that the child mentioned here in chapter eight was born to Isaiah’s wife. Since we read that she had already given birth to at least one child (7:3), we can be certain that Isaiah’s wife was not a virgin. It could be remotely possible that the wife mentioned here in chapter eight is a different wife than the one mentioned in chapter seven, but it is highly unlikely. The name of Isaiah’s wife is not given. However, we are told that she was a “prophetess.” It is *possible* that she was called a prophetess simply because she was married to a prophet, but it is more *probable* that the term was used to describe a God-given ability that was used for God’s glory even if this was the only time she did it. There are other references to prophetesses in the Bible. Miriam, the older sister of Moses, was called “the prophetess” in Exodus 15:20. That same word was used to describe Deborah in Judges 4:4. A woman by the name of Huldah is called “a prophetess” in 2 Kings 22:14. From there, we also read of Noadiah (Nehemiah 6:14), Anna (Luke 2:36), and the four daughters of Philip (Acts 21:8-9).

Prayer Emphasis: **Read** your Bible with an open mind! **Realize** that God has often used women in significant ways in times past and **believe** that He can still do the same today. **Pray** for the many wonderful women who faithfully serve the Lord in and through our church!

Day 11: Isaiah 9:1-21

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end...” (Isaiah 9:6-7a)

There is no time in our lives when we are as weak, helpless, and dependent as we are in those first days and weeks after our birth. Yet, when God decided to send His “only begotten Son” (John 3:16) to this world, He sent Him to us as a child! But, if Jesus was to be “a High Priest who (could) sympathize with our weaknesses” and be “in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15), then He needed to be touched by the weaknesses of even the smallest child. Jesus is as eternal as God the Father. He was “in the beginning with God” when God created the heavens and the earth, and “all things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made” (John 1:2-3). As God, Jesus has always been, and He will always be! However, as our Savior, He had to have a beginning. Hence, He came to us as a child – the Child of God! It is important to note that Isaiah prophesied of the birth of Jesus Christ some 700 years before that first Christmas night in Bethlehem. The first Christmas present ever given was “wrapped in swaddling cloths” and was found, not under a Christmas tree, but “lying in a manger” (Luke 2:12). The “government...upon His shoulder” will be unlike any government known to man. The “Leader” of that government has never asked what we can do for Him but has always been greatly concerned with what He can do for us. He will know how to best treat His servants because He, Himself, came in the form of a servant.

Prayer Emphasis: Thank God for the wonderful gift of His Son! **Praise** God for sending His Son to be born in a manger, live a perfect life, die for our sins on the cross, and then be buried to rise again on the third day! **Be mindful and appreciative** for all that you have in Christ!

Day 12: Isaiah 10:1-14

“Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees, who write misfortune, which they have prescribed to rob the needy of justice, and to take what is right from the poor of My people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless.” (Isaiah 10:1-2)

In this message, God used Isaiah to show how different the government under which the people were currently serving was from the one that Christ was going to someday establish on the earth. The leaders in Israel were vastly different from what God had earlier commanded them to be. A quick look at verses like Exodus 22:22 and 23:6 and then Deuteronomy 15:7-8 and 24:17-18 will reveal that God wrote laws that addressed the way that the less fortunate and the needy were to be treated. It seems clear that Israel’s leaders were failing their people – and thereby violating God’s laws – in at least five ways: 1) They were writing unjust laws and “unrighteous decrees;” 2) They used these laws to “rob the needy of justice;” 3) and “to take what (was) right from the poor;” 4) while “widows” became “their prey;” and 5) they could use these laws to “rob the fatherless.” If you take the time to compare Scripture to Scripture, you will see that these charges are remarkably similar to the sinful actions that Jesus referenced in Matthew 25:42-43. Since the number five is so associated with “grace” throughout the Bible, then it seems to me that the people who do just the opposite of what these corrupt, unrighteous leaders were doing would be acting in such a way that the grace of God would be exhibited in their lives.

Prayer Emphasis: Remember the “Golden Rule” and treat other people the way that you would want them to treat you. **Consider** the needs of the poor, the widows, and the fatherless and **take** some deliberate actions to bring aid, comfort, and relief to someone in need.

Day 13: Isaiah 10:15-34

“Shall the ax boast itself against him who chops with it? Or shall the saw exalt itself against him who saws with it? As if a rod could wield itself against those who lift it up, or as if a staff could lift up, as if it were not wood!” (Isaiah 10:15)

In yesterday’s Scripture, we read where God spoke of “the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his haughty looks” (10:12). After God delivered the people of Israel over to him, this proud king said, “By the strength of my hand **I** have done it, and by my wisdom, for **I** am prudent; also **I** have removed the boundaries of the people, and have robbed their treasuries; so **I** have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man” (10:13). In response to this king’s proud boasting, God used the illustration of an ax, a saw, a rod, and a staff to illustrate that none of these things can do anything without someone using them to do it! In response to his arrogance, “the LORD of hosts” chose to “send leanness” (a time of poverty) and then utterly destroy that kingdom “in one day” (vs. 16-17). If there is anything that we should clearly remember about God, it is that He absolutely abhors pride! In Proverbs 6, God listed some things that He hates. The first thing mentioned on that list is “a proud look” (Proverbs 6:17). Later God would say, “Pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate” (Proverbs 8:13). It is no wonder, then, that “pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18) and that “a man’s pride will bring him low” (Proverbs 29:23).

Prayer Emphasis: **Resist** the temptation to rob God of any of His glory and **remember** to praise Him for any and all good that is accomplished through you. **Heed** the words of Jesus in Luke 17:10: “So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’”

Day 14: Isaiah 11:1-16

“There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.” (Isaiah 11:1-2)

The last two verses of Isaiah 10 record the fact that God did some much-needed pruning work on the enemies of His people. He said that He would “lop off the bough with terror” and that “those of high stature” would “be hewn down” (10:33). However, after all the pruning was done, God said there would “come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse” and that “a branch” would “grow out of his roots” (11:1). In other words, God said that the Assyrian empire was going to fall but a new empire would soon replace it. God was undoubtedly using Isaiah to remind His people of the promise He made to David many years before when He said, “Your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever” (2 Samuel 7:16). This promise meant that a descendant of David would eventually rule over Israel forever. So, just as it is when we prune, or cut back, our trees and shrubs, new growth eventually comes forth in its time and the tree or plant is restored. Such was to be the case with Israel and the rule of David’s lineage. Well, just in case you did not know it, Jesse was David’s father. So, out of the stumps and stubs of the pruned branches, a new sprout would come forth and reach up for the heavens. At the time of this writing, the rule of David had been dormant for approximately 600 years, but God had clearly not forgotten His promise to David.

Prayer Emphasis: **Believe** that God never forgets His promises and **commit** to waiting patiently for His divine plan to eventually unfold in your own life. **Count** the number of times that you find “the Spirit” mentioned in verse two. **Realize** that the same Spirit now lives in you!

Day 15: Isaiah 12:1-13:8

“And in that day you will say, ‘O LORD, I will praise You; though you were angry with me, your anger is turned away, and You comfort me. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; for YAH, the LORD, is my strength and song; He has also become my salvation.’ Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” (Isaiah 12:1-3)

Most every Christian has heard the words of Isaiah 12:3 at some time or another in life. There are three words that I would like to mention as we consider these focus verses. The first is the word *promise*. There are some wonderful promises made to God’s people in these verses. There is the promise of “praise;” the promise of “comfort;” boldness (“and not be afraid”); spiritual “strength;” joy (“the LORD is my strength and song”); and, most important of all, the promise of “salvation.” Because of these promises one would think that every believer would be daily, “with joy,” drawing spiritual “water from the wells of salvation.” But, before we routinely claim these promises, we would do well to note that these verses also contain a *preface*. The first words of Isaiah 12:1 are “in that day.” Those words refer back to the day of deliverance that Isaiah began to prophecy about in 11:1 and continued to speak about until we get here to Isaiah 12:1. So, the promises were abundant, but they were not going to be available until a coming day that was only known to God. It was not going to be until after God’s anger was “turned away” that God’s people were going to be able to rightfully claim these promises. I have been known to repeat myself, but here is a statement worth repeating: “If we will be what God wants us to be, God will always do what He promises He can do.” Sometimes the only thing holding back God’s promises is our disobedience. The third word that I want to quickly mention is *patience*. Note that this day is said to be a day “you will say” (future tense) and a day about which they had to say, “I will (future tense) praise You.”

Prayer Emphasis: **Believe** that God’s promises are always worth the wait! **Encourage** someone who is in a “waiting phase” in life today!

Day 16: Isaiah 13:9-22

“And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans’ pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.” (Isaiah 13:19)

Just as I shared some thoughts on three words that came to mind from yesterday’s focus verses, I want to mention three thoughts that came to mind when I read what God had to say about the destruction of Babylon. There is no question that this city was known for its “glory” and “beauty” and it was surely the “Chaldean’s pride” and joy. However, today’s Scripture reading shares the story of this city’s ultimate downfall and destruction. Since we are told that the fall of Babylon was likened to the overthrow of “Sodom and Gomorrah,” we cannot help but to think of the word *patience*. Before Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, God demonstrated great patience by honoring Abraham’s pleas to spare the city if he could find 50 righteous men there. He then bargained with God for His mercy to be shown if he could find 45, then 40, then 30, then 20, and finally only 10 righteous men in those cities. Surely God was trying to show us that He had exhibited that same patience while dealing with the people of Babylon. The second word that comes to mind today is the word *punishment*. One cannot read today’s verses without realizing that God hates sin! The third word that comes to mind is the word *permanent*. God said that when He had finished with Babylon, that great city would never again “be inhabited” (v. 20).

Prayer Emphasis: **Pray** for our nation today and ask God to continue to show His grace and mercy to us. **Pray** for those in governmental leadership and ask God to guide them in their thoughts and actions. **Pray** for a spirit of love and unity to be restored in our country. In short, **Pray, Pray, Pray!!!**

Day 17: Isaiah 14:1-15

“How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation...I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’” (Isaiah 14:12-14)

As you read the prophetic words found in Isaiah 14, you must bear in mind that this is a continuation of the prophecy against Babylon and its king that began in chapter 13. You must also be aware that this prophecy has two aspects to its fulfillment. First, there was to be a more *immediate* fulfillment in the way God was going to deal with Babylon, its people, and its king. As powerful as Babylon’s fall proved to be, it was only a partial fulfillment of the prophecy that God delivered through Isaiah on that day. Eventually there was to be a more *ultimate* fulfillment of this prophecy when God would someday judge the spiritual “Babylon” that now exists under the leadership and authority of Satan. You will read where some scholars (so called) believe that this passage refers only to the past king of Babylon and that this prophecy was ultimately and completely fulfilled in that city’s fall and destruction. As difficult as it might be for you to believe, there are many pastors and Bible teachers, both past and present, who simply do not believe in the existence of Satan – or for that matter, the hell to which he will eventually be condemned! While I do believe that this prophecy was spoken against the king of Babylon, I also believe that it was spoken against Satan and that the horrible destruction that fell upon Babylon was to serve as an example of how God’s wrath will someday be poured out against the kingdom of Satan during the tribulation.

Prayer Emphasis: Read from your Bible daily and **believe** that you are reading the very words of Almighty God! **Resist** the efforts of those in this world who would try to destroy our faith in the Bible!

Day 18: Isaiah 14:16-32

“‘For I will rise up against them,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘and cut off from Babylon the name and remnant, and offspring and posterity,’ says the LORD. ‘I will also make it a possession for the porcupine, and marshes of muddy water; I will sweep it with the broom of destruction,’ says the LORD of hosts.” (Isaiah 14:22-23)

Yesterday, we read about five “I wills” attributed literally to the king of Babylon and, I believe, to Satan himself. He said, “I will ascend into heaven” and “I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.” He then said, “I will also sit on the mount of the congregation” and “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds.” Then, he revealed the motivation behind all these actions when he said, “I will be like the Most High” (14:13-14). God responded to those statements with three “I wills” of His own when He said, “For *I will* rise up against them” (v. 22). The “them” referenced there was the present, literal kingdom of Babylon of that day and the spiritual Babylon of the future. God then said, “*I will* make it a possession for the porcupine...*I will* sweep it with the broom of destruction.” These things we can know for a surety, the coming destruction of the spiritual kingdom of Satan will be as complete and final as the destruction of the literal kingdom of the people, and king, of Babylon. There are ancient documents that revealed that Sennacherib of Assyria described Babylon with similar words after he attacked and destroyed it. The facts of that destruction are well documented. In the same way, our confidence in the Bible as the Word of God causes us to believe that the eventual, future fall of the spiritual Babylon is as equally well documented.

Prayer Emphasis: Take comfort in the fact that our great God is more powerful than His enemies and that He will someday defeat them fully and finally! Take some time to **praise** God today for all that He has done to bring about great victory in your life.

Day 19: Isaiah 15:1-9

“The burden against Moab. Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste and destroyed, because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste and destroyed.” (Isaiah 15:1)

We already read Isaiah’s accounts of how God previously dealt with some of Israel’s enemies. Now, here in chapter 15, we read about how God dealt with another of those enemies, namely Moab. Two cities that were strongholds of Moab, Ar and Kir, are specifically mentioned in today’s focus verse. Several things are important to note in God’s statements about how He would deal with these enemies of Israel. First, we are told that God had a “burden against Moab.” The Hebrew word that is translated “burden” here in the NKJV and other translations of the Bible, is translated “oracle,” “prophecy,” or “message” in various other translations. The reason that this “message” is translated “burden” in some Bibles is because this message was a “heavy” or “burdensome” message against that nation. The phrase “in the night” is used to say that the things that needed to be done to deal with this enemy, were things that Israel could not do for themselves. To me, the message is clear that God is telling His people they should allow Him to deal with their enemies while they remained focused on their commitment to serving Him. Too many Christians try to deal with their enemies, especially their chief enemy, Satan, in their own strength and on their own terms. Every Christian would do well to realize that God is better equipped to fight their battles against the enemy than they are.

Prayer Emphasis: Allow God to fight your battles and **believe** that our enemies are “overcome” because “He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). **Rest assured** that no “Moab” is a match for Almighty God!

Day 20: Isaiah 16:1-13

“Send the lamb to the ruler of the land, from Sela to the wilderness, to the mount of the daughters of Zion. For it shall be as a wandering bird thrown out of the nest; so shall be the daughters of Moab at the fords of the Arnon.” (Isaiah 16:1-2)

We often hear Christians say, “we are to *hate* the *sin* but *love* the *sinner*.” However, we would do well to recognize that this noble statement is easier said than done! We often find that separating the sinner from the sin is a challenging task. Years before Moab became an enemy of Israel, it had been a faithful ally. 2 Kings 3:4 explains that “Mesha king of Moab was a sheep breeder, and he regularly paid the king of Israel one hundred thousand lambs and the wool of one hundred thousand rams.” Moab sent those offerings to Israel out of their respect for them and their God. Now, after Moab has been destroyed, God tells the people of Moab that they are to return to the practice of paying tribute to Israel and God by sending “the lamb to the ruler of the land.” The “land” they were to send those lambs to is clearly identified in the phrase “to the mount of the daughters of Zion.” After God’s destruction of Moab, the people there were likened to “wandering birds” that had been prematurely “thrown out of the nest.” The Arnon River flowed through a deep gorge that, in these modern times, is referred to as the “Grand Canyon of Jordan.” Because of this deep gorge, this river was difficult to cross and served as a protective border that prevented Moab from easily attacking God’s people. But now that Moab was utterly destroyed, God directed His people to show kindness to the survivors (refugees) of Moab who might want to restore a right relationship with them. By this command, God was showing His people how they might genuinely love their enemies.

Prayer Emphasis: Practice the fine art of expressing love through words and deeds – especially through forgiveness and acceptance. Immediately after God brought an enemy to its *knees*, He commanded His people to take definite actions that would help them return to their *feet*.

Day 21: Isaiah 17:1-14

“In that day a man will look to his Maker, and his eyes will have respect for the Holy One of Israel. He will not look to the altars, the work of his hands; he will not respect what his fingers have made, nor the wooden images nor the incense altars.” (Isaiah 17:7-8)

The Bible repeatedly makes it clear to us that God’s ultimate purpose for *retribution* is *restoration*. Retribution is defined as “punishment inflicted on someone for a wrong or vengeful act.” Today’s focus verses help us see that God did not punish Israel, or its enemies, simply because He was angry. If His punishment had been merely a way to express His anger, then the punishment would have been for His benefit and not for theirs. Since we know that God always acts with the benefit of His children in mind, we know that His chastisement is always for their future good. For the believer, there is a right way to react to chastisement. Today’s verses help us see that retribution is about *attention* and *prevention*. It is about *attention* because chastisement sometimes causes us to return focus back to God. Note that He said, “In that day” (the day of judgment and chastisement) “a man will *look to his Maker*.” The word “Maker” that is used in that verse is used to enforce the truth that all people are God’s children by creation. To “look to his Maker” means to return to the mindset where we “have respect for the Holy One of Israel.” It is about *prevention* because it may mean that we will no longer “look to the altars” that are the “work of (our) hands” nor to any other religious symbols or idols that man’s “fingers have made.”

Prayer Emphasis: Learn this valuable lesson from this prophecy against God’s enemies: “Disobedience and disrespect for God sometimes leads to personal and spiritual destruction.” We believe that once someone is a child of God, they will always be a child of God. However, we **realize** that God sometimes chastises His children – but always with their best interest at heart.

Day 22: Isaiah 18:1-19:10

“The burden against Egypt. Behold, the LORD rides on a swift cloud, and will come into Egypt; the idols of Egypt will totter at His presence, and the heart of Egypt will melt in its midst.” (Isaiah 19:1)

Chapters 18 and 19 are a continuation of God’s pronouncements of judgment against the enemies of His people. While chapter 18 deals with God’s judgment against Ethiopia, chapter 19’s pronouncement is against Egypt. The word “burden” is again used in today’s focus verse because God is here sending another “heavy” or “burdensome” message against those who stand against His beloved people. In chapter 19, God reminds Egypt that He will come against them like “a swift cloud” and that their gods (just as it was in the time of the Exodus) will not be able to stand against Him and that the “presence” of God against Egypt would cause their “heart” to “melt.” God’s judgment was said to be so severe against Egypt that it would “set Egyptians against Egyptians” (v. 2). In other words, the nation of Egypt was to become its own worst enemy, and their national “spirit” would “fail” (v. 3.) Ultimately, God’s wrath against the mighty nation of Egypt would cause “its foundations to be broken” (v. 10). Since Egypt was often used symbolically as an enemy of God and His people, God is sending yet another clear message here, that the very “foundation” (the strong ground on which that nation had been built) would be “broken.” The Hebrew word that is translated “broken” in verse 10 is a word that means “to be crushed” or “pulverized into pieces.”

Prayer Emphasis: Remember that God’s wrath can sometimes be furious and final. **Reject** any lifestyle that will cause God to come against your sinful attitudes and actions in such a way that it will cause you to be “ashamed” (v. 9) and “broken” (v. 10).

Day 23: Isaiah 19:11-25

“In that day Egypt will be like women, and will be afraid and fear because of the waving of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which He waves over it. And the land of Judah will be a terror to Egypt; everyone who makes mention of it will be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts which He has determined against it.” (Isaiah 19:16-17)

Sometimes we need to remind ourselves that even the prophets who delivered God’s messages did not always fully understand them. The thought that little Judah would someday “be a terror to Egypt” must have seemed foreign to both Isaiah and his listeners! But we must remember that it was not Judah that brought fear into the hearts and minds of the Egyptians, but “the hand of the LORD of hosts.” Just the very mention of God coming against Egypt – or for that matter any enemy of God’s people – was enough to make that nation “afraid in himself.” That term literally means that any nation against whom “the LORD of hosts” moved knew that they had no power within themselves or their false religions and gods to stand against Him. God’s “counsel” represented His Word or His determination against them. If God said that He would make them afraid, then you can believe that He had the power to do so! No one wanted to stand against God’s people when they realized that to do so would mean they had to stand against “the LORD of hosts!” I am sure that the Egyptians had historical records of their first attempts to stand against God, and I am equally sure that they never forgot how His miraculous signs and wonders that are recorded in the book of Exodus made their false gods look weak and powerless!

Prayer Emphasis: Continue to watch for the phrase “the LORD of hosts” and **remember** that it is referring to God as “the LORD of the armies of heaven.” **Be bold** in your work for God and **believe** that “the LORD of hosts” is always with you!

Day 24: Isaiah 20:1-21:17

“At the same time the LORD spoke by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, ‘Go, and remove the sackcloth from your body, and take your sandals off your feet.’ And he did so, walking naked and barefoot.” (Isaiah 20:2)

In chapter 20 we read Isaiah’s prophecy against Egypt and Ethiopia while in chapter 21 we see the prophecies against Babylon, Edom, and Arabia. In all these situations, these nations were all going to eventually feel the shame that would normally be associated with being publicly “naked and barefoot.” There is no reason to believe that Isaiah was walking about every day of his life with no shoes on his feet or no clothing on his body. When Isaiah was told to “remove the sackcloth from (his) body,” he was being told to remove his outer garment, leaving him to walk about in only his inner garment which was much like a nightshirt. One of the things that a conquering nation did to their fallen enemies was to force their men, especially their soldiers, to walk around in their underclothes and without their shoes. It was a form of humiliation, and it sent a clear message to everyone that these people had been defeated and stripped of their pride, prestige, and protection. You can be assured such humiliation would take a lot of the fight out of even the best of men. It is likely that Isaiah spent only portions of his days walking around like this, but when he did, it was a visual aid to support the message that he was desperately trying to deliver. Isaiah was trying to tell the people that they were soon to face some incredibly sad days of poverty and woe.

Prayer Emphasis: Refuse to allow Satan to glamorize sin! **Remember** that while Jesus bore our sins on the cross, He was “despising the shame” the entire time that He did so (Hebrews 12:2). See sin for what it is and **refuse** to yield to Satan’s temptations and lies.

Day 25: Isaiah 22:1-25

“For it is a day of trouble and treading down and perplexity by the LORD GOD of hosts in the Valley of Vision – breaking down the walls and of crying to the mountain.” (Isaiah 22:5)

If you recall, the first five chapters of Isaiah found Isaiah pronouncing “woes” against many different things that people were doing to oppress the poor and the needy. It seemed that Isaiah could clearly see the sinful things that everyone around him was doing. But then, in chapter six, after Isaiah “saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up” (6:1), he took his eyes off others, examined his own life, and cried out, “Woe is *me*, for *I* am undone!” He then pronounced himself to be “a man of unclean lips” (6:5). Now, in a similar way, Isaiah moves from prophecies of judgment against virtually every surrounding nation to a prophecy of judgment against Judah and Jerusalem. Jerusalem was under siege and there was nothing that the people who lived within her walls could do to prevent her ultimate fall and capture. As such, God pronounced that they were in “a day of trouble.” Verse one tells us that the inhabitants of the city had “all gone up to the housetops” to see the army that was approaching and would eventually surround their city. They knew it was only a matter of time before it would also be “a day of...treading down.” That phrase implied that they knew it would not be long until the enemy soldiers were walking through their streets. As such, it was also going to be “a day of...perplexity” because there was nothing the people could do to protect their city from the invading army or to prevent them from entering their gates.

Prayer Emphasis: Realize that God does not spare His people from chastisement when it is the appropriate response to their actions. **Refuse** to see yourself or our nation as the exception to that rule!

Day 26: Isaiah 23:1-18

“Who has taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traders are the honorable of the earth? The LORD of hosts has purposed it, to bring to dishonor the pride of all glory, to bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth.” (Isaiah 23:8-9)

There were times when God’s people had to have thought favorably of the nation of Tyre. After all, at one time in the past, “Hiram king of Tyre” was helpful to King David, and his people “built David a house” (2 Samuel 5:11). And then, when Solomon was ready to build the temple, a house for God, he turned to the ruler and people of Tyre to help him accomplish that feat (1 Kings 5:1-6). But then, at a later time, that same region produced and introduced Jezebel to the nation of Israel, and that woman proved to be the most evil woman ever mentioned in the Bible (1 Kings 16:31). There is one thing that you can be assured of and that is that God always has a divine purpose for everything He does! In the case of the disastrous fall of the nation of Tyre, God’s purpose was to “dishonor the pride of all glory.” That phrase reveals that the pride that Tyre felt was a pride that was above all pride that existed in its day. And why wouldn’t they have been filled with pride? Their “merchants” were honored and treated as royalty, and their “princes” and their “traders” were considered to be the most “honorable of the earth” (v. 8). To this point in time, the people of Tyre had every reason to be happy. Their city was prosperous and powerful. Yet, God said to them, “You will rejoice no more” and “you will have no rest” (v. 12). How wise we would be to recognize that true happiness and contentment is not found in what we have but in who we are – children of God!

Prayer Emphasis: Believe there will be a Judgment Day and that every effort you have made to humbly serve God will be made worth the while! **Resist** the temptation to be envious of those who continually sin and yet seem to prosper.

Day 27: Isaiah 24:1-23

“Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty and makes it waste, distorts its surface and scatters abroad its inhabitants...the land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered, for the LORD has spoken this word.” (Isaiah 24:1 & 3)

After several chapters of reading about God pronouncing His judgment against several nations and cities, we now read about His worldwide judgment against the entire earth. This prophecy of worldwide judgment will continue throughout chapters 24 through 27. Some commentators and scholars refer to these three powerful chapters as “Isaiah’s Apocalypse” and consider these chapters to be an Old Testament vision of what we now see in the Book of Revelation. Isaiah uses the word “behold” to gain the attention of his listeners because he is about to describe a scenario to them that they will want to avoid. In our two focus verses, we see the word “empty” or “emptied.” While the earth will not be completely “empty” during the tribulation period, it will be much less populated during and after the seven years of tribulation and judgment than it was just before that period began. In the first place, the world will be missing the many Christians who were snatched away and taken to heaven at the time of the rapture. And then, many others will die during the seven years of tribulation, which is to follow that event. In one day alone, one third of the remaining people on earth will be killed (Revelation 9:15). Jesus said that those coming days would “be a great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world” and that “unless those days were shortened (limited), no flesh would be saved” (Matthew 24:21-22).

Prayer Emphasis: Believe that the judgment that God’s Word proclaims will someday actually happen. **Live and witness** to others as though you believe that the day of the rapture of the saints and the first day of the seven years of tribulation that will follow that event could be today!

Day 28: Isaiah 25:1-26:6

“O LORD, You are my God. I will exalt You, I will praise Your name, for You have done wonderful things; Your counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.” (Isaiah 25:1)

Yesterday’s reading (chapter 24) was a prophecy concerning worldwide desolation that ultimately pointed to the great tribulation period that will be part of God’s final judgment against the world. Today’s chapter looks beyond the rapture of the church and the seven years of tribulation that will follow. The prophecy in today’s chapter is ultimately speaking of the millennial reign of Christ – the 1,000-year period where Christ will rule and reign on this earth. As such, chapter 25 is a psalm of praise with God, and His deliverance of His people, being the center of that praise. I could not help but notice that Isaiah speaks of those coming days in the first person. Even though the Old Testament saints did not understand heaven and eternity as clearly as those of us who have lived after the cross and the resurrection, it is clear that Isaiah fully expected to be a part of the great celebration that would take place when God began to rule the world with His “counsels of old” that “are faithfulness and truth.” Notice that Isaiah said, “I will exalt You” and “I will praise Your name.” The reference to the LORD’s “name” was a reference to His “revealed character.” In heaven, we will see and appreciate God for who He is, and we will “exalt” Him and “praise” Him accordingly. At the same time that we are praising God for who He is, we will also be praising Him for the “wonderful things” He has done.

Prayer Emphasis: Practice for your tomorrows in heaven by offering God some praise on earth today. **Praise** Him for who He is and then **praise** Him for what He has done for you. **Count** your blessings today and thank God for the way He has cared for you, your family, and our church.

Day 29: Isaiah 26:7-21

“Your dead shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise...Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is past.” (Isaiah 26:19-20)

As we have already said, Isaiah 26 is a song of praise. However, the closing verses of that song refer to the terrible judgment and tribulation that God will ultimately pour out upon this world when He “comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity” (v. 21). Just before those words of woe, God included two precious promises for His believers. They were precious to those who heard them then, and they should be equally precious to those of us who hear them today. First, God promised them *resurrection*. He said to them then (and to us now), “Your dead shall live!” For those of us who are serving on this side of the cross and the empty tomb, those words are much more easily understood than they might have been for those who first heard Isaiah speak to them. However, whether the people understood the promise or not, the promise was made, and we now know that God surely kept that promise. The second thing that God promised His people was *refuge*. They were going to be provided with divine protection against the days of God’s wrath. They were going to be invited to “Come” and “enter” into a place that God had prepared for them. It was a place where God promised them that they could “shut (their) doors behind (them)” and “hide” themselves “until the indignation (was) past.”

Prayer Emphasis: As a believer, you may **rest assured** that you will not live through the terrible years of the tribulation period! You can also be assured that you will someday see your loved ones who have gone before in heaven! **Mention** your assurance of that fact to someone today!

Day 30: Isaiah 27:1-13

“So it shall be in that day: The great trumpet will be blown; they will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, and they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.” (Isaiah 27:13)

Trumpets have always been important in the Bible. In Bible times, trumpets were sometimes made from a ram’s horn (hence we still sometimes refer to them as “horns”), and sometimes they were made of metal. In either case, they were used sometimes for the purpose of *entertainment* but most of the time for *exhortation*. In Numbers, we read where trumpets were blown in one way to indicate that God’s people were to assemble and, in another way, to indicate that they were to march on toward the Promised Land. In the Old Testament, we read where trumpets were used for giving signals for war by military leaders like Joshua, Ehud, Gideon, and Joab. In Leviticus, we read where trumpets were blown “throughout the land” to announce the Day of Atonement. In Ezekiel 33:3 and Joel 2:1, we see where trumpets were used to warn God’s people of approaching danger. The New Testament also uses the trumpet as a symbol of God’s signaling His people that something especially important is about to happen. In Matthew 24:31, Jesus said that He would “send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet” to “gather His elect from...one end of heaven to the other.” But, for those of us who are alive on this earth today, there is one great trumpet sound that we are waiting to hear – that being the coming moment that “the trumpet will sound, and the dead in Christ will be raised...and we (those who are alive at the time of the rapture) will be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:52).

Prayer Emphasis: **Live** with the expectation that the trumpet could sound and announce the rapture of the church at any moment! **Focus** on being what God has called you to be today!

Day 31: Isaiah 28:1-13

“Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower which is at the head of the verdant valleys, to those who are overcome with wine!” (Isaiah 28:1)

Immediately after Isaiah completed his prophecies concerning the rapture of the church, the tribulation, and the millennial reign of Christ (chapters 24-27), he returned to pronouncing “woes” upon those who might reject his messages from God. These pronouncements of woe would begin here at chapter 28 and continue through chapter 33. In these messages, Isaiah would speak directly to the people of Israel and Judah and their habit of looking to other nations as their source of sustenance and shelter rather than to God. We will read more about that in chapters 30 and 31. The message that we find here in Isaiah 28:1-13 is spoken against Ephraim, a prominent tribe in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Ephraim was here used as representatives of the entire Northern Kingdom and this message was spoken with all of Israel in mind. As it says in our focus verse, Ephraim was “the crown of pride” to Israel and was an area of “glorious beauty.” The influence of the region of Ephraim was so great that Rehoboam thought it necessary to hold his inauguration ceremony in one of its cities, Shechem (1 Kings 12:1). There is no question but that the region known as Ephraim was the main support of the Northern Kingdom and that the entirety of the kingdom was soon known by its name. In this specific message against them, the people of Ephraim are likened to a drunkard who had been “overcome with wine.” As such, their judgment was in question and their actions were unacceptable.

Prayer Emphasis: Refuse to allow foolish pride to deceive you into believing that God does not judge and chastise His erring people. **Realize** that our own days of “glorious beauty” could be as “a fading flower” if God removed His hand of blessing from us. **Thank God** for His grace and mercy today!

Day 32: Isaiah 28:14-29

“Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you scornful men, who rule this people who are in Jerusalem, because you have said, ‘We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol we are in agreement. When the overflowing scourge passes through, it will not come to us...’” (Isaiah 28:14-15)

Just as Ephraim was the “crown” of the Northern Kingdom, Jerusalem was the leading city of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. As sad as it is to say, the people of Judah felt that they were safe from the “overflowing scourge” (God’s wrath) that was to come against them because they had formed strong alliances with other nations. God used the figures of “death” and “Sheol” to show the futility of such alliances and the sin of turning to anyone but Him for protection. God was clear to say that they had made “lies (their) refuge” and they had hidden themselves “under falsehood” (v. 15). God was very quick to tear down the walls of their proclaimed strongholds. He said their “covenant with death (would) be annulled” and their “agreement with Sheol (would) not stand” when “the overflowing scourge” came against them. In fact, God said they would be “trampled down by it” (v. 18). God warned His people that trusting in foreign nations and their false gods would be like trying to rest in a bed that was too short for them and like trying to cover themselves with a blanket that was too small for them (v. 20). In other words, God wanted them to know that their every effort to escape from having to deal with Him – and Him alone – was a waste of time and energy. Hence, Isaiah warned the people to “not be mockers” because the message he was delivering to them was one he “heard from the LORD God of hosts” (v. 22).

Prayer Emphasis: Refuse to trust in anyone but God for your own deliverance from judgment and hell. **Do not** trust in the lie that you can be good enough to save yourself. **Do not** trust in false doctrines (such as predestination) that say fate decides all and there is no need to turn to God for salvation.

Day 33: Isaiah 29:1-24

“Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! Add year to year; let feasts come around. Yet I will distress Ariel; there shall be heaviness and sorrow, and it shall be to me as Ariel.” (Isaiah 29:1-2)

Five “woes” are pronounced in Isaiah 28-33. We saw the first of those woes in Isaiah 28:1, and the second woe is pronounced in the first verse of chapter 29. As was always the case with chastisement, God’s purpose for this *retribution* was *restoration*. It is always God’s will that His children walk in a covenant relationship with Him, and He is not beyond using circumstances to get our attention. It is obvious that “Ariel” is a reference to Jerusalem. That is made quite clear when God referred to it as “the city where David dwelt.” In 2 Samuel 5:7 & 9, Jerusalem is called “the city of David.” Isaiah is the only person in the Bible who was directed to refer to Jerusalem as Ariel, and he did it only four times, with all four of those references being found here in today’s chapter. You will find this word once in Ezra, but it is there referring to a person rather than to a place. This word finds its root in a Hebrew word that is translated “lion” in almost 80 places in the Old Testament, with seven of those occurrences being in Isaiah. (You can watch for the word “lion” in chapters 31, 35, 38, and 65.) In this case, this name is used to remind the people of Jerusalem of the way their enemies once viewed them – as “the lion of God.” But, “year by year” (or little by little) things changed, and Jerusalem’s enemies no longer feared her as they had in the past. Now they no longer had the roar of a lion, but their “speech” was “low” and more like a “whisper” (v. 4).

Prayer Emphasis: There are few things that are more pitiful than the Christian who has lost his boldness for God. **Pray** that you will always be willing to stand up and to speak out for God!

Day 34: Isaiah 30:1-17

“‘Woe to the rebellious children,’ says the LORD, ‘who take counsel, but not of Me, and who devise plans, but not of My Spirit, that they may add sin to sin; who walk to go down to Egypt, and have not asked My advice, to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!’” (Isaiah 30:1-2)

The first verse of today’s reading contains yet another “woe” that is pronounced against God’s people. Let me just remind you that this is a word that expresses grief and extreme sorrow, and it is a word that warns of a present or future disaster. It is used more often by Isaiah than almost all the other Old Testament prophets combined! Most of Isaiah’s “woes” were used to express God’s disgust at the actions of His “rebellious children.” Like “children,” God’s people did not *know* what was best for them, and as such, they did not *do* what was best for them. In today’s focus verses, we see that God considers it to be rebellion when His children “take counsel” that is “not of (Him)” and who “devise plans” that are “not of (His) Spirit.” When they do so, God says they “add sin to sin” and only make matters worse. In this specific case, God was referring to Judah’s repeated habit of turning to foreign alliances to protect them from their enemies. In today’s story, the foreign alliance was Egypt. I cannot help but see that God used the term “down to Egypt” in this message to His people. They sought “to strengthen themselves” and to seek refuge “in the shadow of Egypt.” Since there was nothing that Egypt could do for His people, God had Isaiah refer to Egypt as “Rahab-Hem-Shebeth” (v. 7) which means to “sit still” or “do nothing.”

Prayer Emphasis: Realize that this world has no counsel that can compare with the counsel that a believer receives from God’s Word and God’s indwelling Spirit. **Determine** to base your decisions on directions received from God’s Word and God’s Spirit. **Ask God** to give you the strength to resist the temptation to look to others to do for you or to give to you that which only He can provide.

Day 35: Isaiah 30:18-33

“Therefore the LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you; and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him.” (Isaiah 30:18)

Remember the Bible study rule that is often associated with the word “therefore.” When we encounter the word “therefore,” we usually should look back to see what it is “there for.” In the case of today’s “therefore,” we only have to look back to Isaiah 30:16-17 to find its purpose. Because His people decided to trust in “swift horses” (military might), they would soon be left “as a pole on top of a mountain.” That phrase is used to describe God’s people as being left like a tree that had been stripped of all its branches and left exposed (“on top of a mountain”). The closing phrase in verse 17, “and as a banner on a hill,” was used to say that Jerusalem would be left alone, stripped, exposed, and as if it had a sign over it that said, “Come and get me!” “Therefore,” God said He would “wait” because He knew they would soon turn to Him, cry out to Him, and ask for His help. And when they did, He had already made the decision that He would be “gracious” to them! After that statement, we see yet another “therefore.” “Therefore” – or because God would be gracious to His sinful people – He would be “exalted.” And why would God be so “gracious” and patient in His waiting for His people to turn to Him? Because He is “a God of justice.” With that phrase, God was reminding His people that He was in a covenant relationship with them that bound Him to bless them when they obeyed His commands and turned to Him for help.

Prayer Emphasis: Remember that “grace” is getting what we *don’t* deserve while “mercy” is not getting what we *do* deserve. **Understand** that God’s purpose for allowing affliction in our lives is not to *crush* us but to *cure* and *change* us.

Day 36: Isaiah 31:1-32:4

“Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but who do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the LORD!” (Isaiah 31:1)

I have often said that we should pay close attention when God repeats Himself! Again, note that God considers it a step “down” (in the wrong direction) when His people turn to anyone but Him for shelter and protection or rely on the strength of military power over His mighty power! But the greatest sin is not found in the wrong thing God’s people did when they turned to Egypt but in the right they did *not* do when they did *not* “look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the LORD.” Since God is in the habit of repeating Himself, I will take this opportunity to say once again that “the true nature of sin is not found in the *wrong* things that we *do* but in the *right* things that we leave *undone*.” You have heard me say that often from the pulpit and you have read where I have written it in several of our different devotional guides. However, I assure you that it is a very Scriptural statement! James 4:17 says, “Therefore, to him who knows to do good *and does not do it*, to him it is sin.” If any people should have known that God was their only true source of sustenance, shelter, and protection, it should have been the people of Israel! And yet we see them repeating the same mistakes repeatedly – even in the face of God’s repeated warnings!

Prayer Emphasis: Refuse to be like these “children” of God who insisted on learning life’s lessons the hard way! Earn some “extra credit” by reading ahead in Isaiah 55:6 and **obey** God’s command found there: “**Seek** the LORD while He may be found, **call upon Him** while He is near.”

Day 37: Isaiah 32:5-20

“Until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is counted as a forest. Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field.” (Isaiah 32:15-16)

Although these words were spoken to Israel to help them understand how life would be a little like heaven on earth when the invading Assyrian army left them, they were also prophetically spoken about heaven, and specifically about what life would be like when He was the ultimate Ruler over mankind. I do not know if you have ever thought about this or not, but the Old Testament saints did not live with the Holy Spirit dwelling within them in the same way He indwells those of us who live in the church age. Think about all the times that you read about the Spirit of God coming *upon* people in the Old Testament, and then think about how many times you read about the Spirit of God now living *within* us. Well, in heaven, the Old Testament saints will enjoy the same indwelling of the Holy Spirit that is such a blessing to us today. And, as such, life will no longer be a “wilderness” but a “fruitful field.” In heaven, we will live in a place where “justice” always prevails and where “righteousness remains” or prevails at all times. In heaven, everyone will always *think* the right thing, *do* the right thing, and *say* the right thing! What will bring about this amazing transformation? I am convinced that the “wilderness” and the “fruitful field” mentioned in this divine promise represent the hearts of God’s people. In heaven, our hearts will be set on one thing – exalting God!

Prayer Emphasis: Ask God to give you a little bit of heaven on earth in this lifetime! Choose to think, do, and say the right things at the right times by asking God’s Holy Spirit to guide you in your thoughts, actions, and speech.

Day 38: Isaiah 33:1-24

“Woe to you who plunder, though you have not been plundered; and you who deal treacherously, though they have not dealt treacherously with you! When you cease plundering, you will be plundered; when you make an end of dealing treacherously, they will deal treacherously with you.” (Isaiah 33:1)

Speaking of God repeating Himself, how many times do we find God reminding His children of the laws of sowing and reaping? The final “woe” in the series of woes that began in Isaiah 28:1 is found here in today’s focus verse, and it serves as a reminder to us that we can expect to reap what we sow in life. If yesterday’s Scripture reading reminded us of the fact that we can enjoy a little bit of heaven on earth, then today’s reading serves to remind us that life can be a little like “hell on earth” when we choose to live in disobedience to God’s commands. With the words recorded here, Isaiah is directing the attention of God’s plundered people to the fact that they had earlier plundered others and were now only reaping the same things they had sown. If you remember Isaiah’s first series of “woes” (chapters 3-6), you will recall that he pronounced “woes” on those who took advantage of others (3:9) and were “wicked” in the way they treated others (3:11). Even then, God told them that the man who did that could expect that “the reward of his hands shall be given him” (3:11). In 5:20, God said His people had found a way to “call evil good, and good evil.” So, here again, God is saying to his people that much of the agony they were experiencing in their lives might have been payback for some of the evil they had brought against the lives of others. God reminded them that when you have “plundered” others, “you will be plundered” and when you deal “treacherously” with others, someone “will deal treacherously with you.”

Prayer Emphasis: Remember the “Golden Rule” (Matthew 7:12) and treat others the way that you would want people to treat you. Ask God to remove the word “revenge” from your vocabulary.

Day 39: Isaiah 34:1-17

“Come near, you nations, to hear; and heed, you people! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, the world and all things that come forth from it.” (Isaiah 34:1)

The last two chapters we will read in this first devotional on Isaiah provide an excellent breaking point before we begin our reading of the second half of this great book of the Bible and our next devotional guide. Chapters 34 and 35 bring the messages of judgment to a close and provide a fitting introduction to chapters 36 through 39, which will provide details of the actual, historical fulfillment of the prophecies that Isaiah has been commanded to deliver thus far. As we conclude these first 35 chapters of Isaiah, we should be reminded once more that Assyria, and any other nation that has been mentioned in these prophecies, were present day nations that God was using to provide illustrations of how these prophecies would ultimately be fulfilled in the last days and the great tribulation that will come as a result of God’s judgment against the “nations.” How fitting it is to see and hear God give an open invitation to the peoples of the world as He closes out these prophecies of doom. He invites all the “nations” to “Come near” and “to hear!” But even more than that, He urges all the people of “the earth” to “hear” and to “heed” the messages that had been delivered to them. This invitation is yet another reminder to us that God’s purpose for *retribution* is always *restoration*. Sometimes God allows things to happen in our lives simply because He wants to get our attention so we will clearly hear His invitation to “come near” to Him.

Prayer Emphasis: Listen for God’s urgings for you to “come near” to Him, especially in a time of crisis. **Read** verse two of today’s reading once more and realize that God desires to spare all people from “the indignation of the LORD...and His fury.” **Allow** God to reach out to someone through you today.

Day 40: Isaiah 35:1-10

“And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” (Isaiah 35:10)

Today’s chapter provides a great illustration of some of the blessings we can expect in the kingdom God will establish on the earth after the tribulation period has ended. The contrast between the judgments that were earlier pronounced and the blessings that we read about today help us see the vast difference between living *apart* from God and being *a part* of His divine plan and will. The “desert shall rejoice and blossom” (v. 1) and the peoples of the world will “rejoice...with joy and singing” because “they shall see the glory of the LORD” and “the excellency of our God” (v. 2). Life will be glorious in those days because God will “strengthen the weak hands” and “the feeble knees” (v. 3) of all who inhabit His kingdom. In that land, “the eyes of the blind shall be opened...the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped...the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb (shall) sing” (vs. 5-6). After the great time of judgment that the earth will have just experienced, these great blessings will seem like “streams in the desert” (v. 6). It is apparent that those who decided to heed God’s call to “Come near!” will find themselves travelling a well-marked road called “the Highway to Holiness” (v. 8). The statement, “no lion shall be there” provides a clear indication that God’s children will finally be free from the many trials and temptations that have hindered them in their past attempts to walk for God (v. 9). They will “obtain joy and gladness” (v. 10) as welcome gifts from Almighty God!

Prayer Emphasis: Praise God for the hope of heaven today! **Mention** heaven to someone that you encounter along life’s road today. **Contact us** at 850-562-8069 or gary@seminolebc.com if we can pray for you or minister to you and your family in any way.