

A Grievous Vision

Isaiah 21:1 – 22:25

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~ Our Spiritual Safari is consuming much time and space viewing the past history of mankind with the prophet Isaiah in this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God. This is one of the most important prophetic books in Scripture; as it lays the foundation of eschatological principles for each of the other prophets. Isaiah gives us the long view of history; from the ancient past to our present day to the coming glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah also reminds us that the grass withers and the flower fades, but the Word of God Almighty shall stand forever!

It truly humbles me that God has chosen His Spiritual Safari to go out into all the nations of the world and reach so many different people; from young men in Africa to teenage girls in India, to great men of God in Pakistan, to lovely women in many eastern cultures – and many right here in my own country – all of whom are reading, learning and understanding the Bible like never before! When I first began this writing ministry, the forum on which I teach was not in existence. Well, God certainly honored my prayer and commitment to take the entire Word of God to the entire world in sound doctrine in a way that I could never have even dreamed of! Language, culture, age, and background are no longer barriers in sharing the truths of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, today, I invite you to join this safari, and come along with us as we traverse the jungles, plains, vistas, valleys, forests, deserts, oceans, lakes, ponds, savannahs, tundra's, mountain ranges, foothills, cities, highways, streets, roads, alleys and towns as we go through the *whole* Bible!

If you have been with us in our last several reports, you will know that we have been considering the burdens – or judgments – of eleven nations that surrounded Israel in the days of King Jotham, King Ahaz, and King Hezekiah. Many of these judgments are set before us in a manner of symbolism; but were made as clear and easy to understand as the noonday sun to the people who lived in Isaiah's day. Now, while our safari adheres strictly to the literal interpretation of Scripture, we also know that when God uses

symbolism in the Bible, it is always a picture of a real reality. When I see modern interpretations of prophecy, most people use the symbolism to either evaporate the meaning, and make it disappear altogether, or they say “*abra cadabra*” and custom fit it to be whatever theological rabbit they want to pull out of their spiritual hat according to their own agenda. Well, the Bible doesn’t mean anything and everything you want it to mean, friends; it only means *one* thing – and that one thing is what you get on safari.

Today, the insignia of prophetic discourse may not be quite as clear to us as it was to the people in Isaiah’s day; but it can be made clear for us if we will actually spend just a little bit of time each day studying the Bible properly, correctly and completely. That’s why this Bible study considers the **WHOLE** thing, friends; not just pieces and parts. Frankly, most Bible expositors are totally and completely ignorant of this section of Scripture; although, amongst the learned, there is mostly agreement in the interpretation. Unfortunately, so much of the Word of God is utterly neglected today. In fact, I am almost positive that not a single reader of this safari has ever heard a sermon or had a Bible study from the twenty-first chapter of Isaiah. If you have, I would certainly like to know about it. Actually, I have a notion that most of you have never even read this chapter! If you have read it, then you only did so one time; and I am sure you do not remember a single fact about it. Interestingly, this chapter holds complete confirmation of the truth of the pre-millennial, pre-tribulation, and dispensational position of interpretation in the Word of God. While many believers today reject those tenets of truth, there is, literally, no other interpretation that could possibly satisfy this passage – and there are others – but particularly not this one. This excludes all other eschatological theories. That’s why all of the other systems of Bible study, and all other prophetic interpretation, steer well-clear of these chapters concerning judgment....

XXI

1 The burden of the desert of the sea. As whirlwinds in the south pass through; so it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land.

~ The “*desert of the sea*” is an extremely strange paradoxical phrase. It is essentially declaring, “*the dryness of the water.*” Naturally, we have dry-ice and cold-heat today; so, it may not sound as strange to you as it does to me. The real problem is: how do we know what nation this refers to? Well, this is one of those cases where we have to actually continue reading – all the way to verse nine – where we’re told exactly who and what we’re talking about. See, friends, this is one of the main reasons that grabbing a disconnected verse here, and a fractured passage there, and making some wild-eyed application of it is reckless, irresponsible, dangerous, and ignorant. Candidly, I am amazed at how many people do precisely that in religious circles. So, just that easily, we now know that the “*desert of the sea*” is Babylon.

Long before Babylon rose to world dominance, Isaiah predicted her doom in a remarkably detailed manner. We’ve already seen this before in chapters thirteen and fourteen. Babylon would later become so awe-inspiring, so frightful, and deeply representative of myriad symbolism in Scripture, that it would seem Isaiah felt the need to make an addendum concerning its demise. As we know, Babylon was the first place on the earth that formed a united rebellion against the Lord God Almighty. It also represents the last stronghold in the world in said rebellion against God. In Revelation chapter seventeen, we see *religious* Babylon; and in Revelation chapter eighteen, we have *commercial* Babylon — symbolizing and encompassing the soon-coming one-world government, one-world banking system, and one-world religion.

Geographically, ancient Babylon was located in a great desert plain on the Euphrates River. The city was irrigated by canals dredged from the river. Jeremiah describes Babylon by saying, “*...oh, thou that dwellest among many waters....*” - Jeremiah chapter fifty-one verse thirteen. Naturally, the desert and the sea form a weird amalgamation; but John concludes with the same synthesis in Revelation. Remember, John was in the wilderness of the desert when he saw the woman sitting upon many waters. Well, Babylon, with its glitter and glamour of idolatry to the nth degree, was simply a spiritual mirage on the desert. People in that day thought they were going to a magnificent and wonderful city of religious civilization; but it turned out to be a mirage. There wasn’t a single drop of living water to

give spiritual life to the souls of men there. This is something that every pastor, preacher, priest, evangelist, missionary, minister, Bible teacher, and church member needs to turn over in their mind and ask themselves today, too: is my church – or am I – a real life-giving fountain of water? Or am I just a mirage that tricks people into a false hopelessness in the desert wilderness of life? ~

2 A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease.

3 Therefore are my loins filled with pain: pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth: I was bowed down at the hearing of it; I was dismayed at the seeing of it.

4 My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me.

~ Obviously, Isaiah is moved with feeling and emotion as he receives this vision of God commanding Media-Persia – also known as Elam – to move against and destroy Babylon. So, we have another prophecy given before either one of the nations ever even became a nation! Today, no genuine Christian can or will rejoice in the judgment of God, friends. God says His judgment is His “*strange work.*” God doesn’t want to judge us – He wants to *save* us! Well, salvation or judgment is determined by individuals and by nations, also. All of this reads as if it were an eyewitness account of the destruction of Babylon; and it matches exactly as Daniel records it in chapter five of his prophecy. Well, God said it would take place; and Isaiah wrote it down a full two hundred years before it transpired. There is a book entitled “*The Two Babylon’s*” by Alexander Hislop – and I don’t recommend many books *about* the Bible – but it would be a very valuable resource for you if you can find a copy of that book....

5 Prepare the table, watch in the watchtower, eat, drink: arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield.

6 For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth.

7 And he saw a chariot with a couple of horsemen, a chariot of asses, and a chariot of camels; and he hearkened diligently with much heed:

8 And he cried, A lion: My lord, I stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime, and I am set in my ward whole nights:

9 And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.

~ These chariots of men are messengers riding along the desert. This speaks of the time of thrashing, and the time of harvest. Judgment is symbolized by the time of harvest in Scripture; the harvest speaks of the time of judgment. I hear so many people talk about being one of the “few” harvesters today – but that only reveals that those people are totally and completely ignorant of the Word of God. When Jesus said, “*the fields are white with harvest,*” He was speaking of the end of the age of the Mosaic Law; when judgment was coming upon the nation Israel. Our business today is sowing seed; and sowing and harvesting just don’t happen at the same time. Sowing means we are to give out the Word of God. That’s our only business and purpose today. I don’t know why people won’t study the Bible so they can rightly divide it and have it actually mean something to someone – but – they don’t. Well, either way, let’s move along now....

10 O my threshing, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard of the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you.

11 The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?

~ Alright, Dumah is a symbolic word for Edom. We have already seen Isaiah play upon words to paint a picture, carry a message, and extract deeper meanings several times previously in his prophecy. Dumah means

“silence;” and we would use the word “dumb” as it refers to someone who cannot speak. Edom is still the land of a deafening silence. Seir means “rough” or “hairy.” Remember, Esau was the first Seir man in Genesis chapter twenty-five verse twenty-five; and he was hairy. Also, Esau dwelt in Mount Seir; and that’s Genesis chapter thirty-six verse eight. It was a land swept with storms; rough and hairy storms, to be sure. Deafening silence and rough storms; it’s another great paradox. Out of the land of silence and storms comes an inquiry twice repeated. In this hour in which we live, much of the stormy night is gone. God’s glory is going to be revealed when the dawn light breaks forth and the Sun of Righteousness appears and calms the storms of life with healing in His wings. That which will be glory for some people is going to be doom and catastrophe for others. Light for God’s people will be abject darkness for the Edomites — the man of the flesh — who rejected the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior....

12 The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come.

13 The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim.

~ Arabia may seem clear enough; but this is another word that has a double meaning. It can mean ‘evening’ by simply changing the vowel points. Remember, Hebrew is a language that has no vowels; it is comprised of consonants only. One must insert vowels into Hebrew or it would be inarticulate and unintelligible; which is what the Masareet scholars did. Well, Isaiah is saying that it is evening in the history of Arabia. The time of night is further along than most think it is; even those who incessantly talk of end times, and the wholly unbiblical “soon” coming of Jesus.

Moreover, Arabia was the land of the Bedouin desert tribes of the Ishmaelites – the modern day Arab. As we know, this is another son of Abraham — the son whom God commanded Abraham send away. I would love to spend more time with this but, again, we have to keep moving in this Spiritual Safari. I will say this, though: Abraham, looking down from Paradise, now knows his sin with Hagar was no small or insignificant sin. Sin

never ceases working itself out on this earth, nor in the human story – even *LONG* after we're gone, my beloved. You might want to contemplate that for a while. It will explain a lot of the problems and sorrows in your life – and mine, too. We can all thank God that the blackness of the night of sin will soon be over for us, and the dawn of joy will finally arrive....

14 The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty, they prevented with their bread him that fled.

15 For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war.

16 For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Within a year, according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail:

17 And the residue of the number of archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be diminished: for the LORD God of Israel hath spoken it.

XXII

1 The burden of the valley of vision. What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the housetops?

~ The valley of vision refers to Jerusalem. We know that because verses four, eight and nine make it clear God is talking about His people and their cities. Again, we have to actually *read* the Bible to correctly consider the collection of Holy Writ — or we will remain desperately lost and hopelessly confused. Hezekiah took all the precautions mentioned in this chapter regarding defending Jerusalem and circumventing its judgment. Remember, King Hezekiah placed a wall around the fountain so they wouldn't run out of water; and you can still see that over there today. Well, again, we could probably spend a little more time with this, too; but we'll be coming back to it – so, we'll move along and complete this leg of our expedition through the entire Bible in our Spiritual Safari....

2 Thou that art full of stirs, a tumultuous city, a joyous city: thy slain men are not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle.

3 All thy rulers are fled together, they are bound by the archers: all that are found in thee are bound together, which have fled from far.

4 Therefore said I, Look away from me; I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people.

5 For it is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord GOD of hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains.

6 And Elam bare the quiver with chariots of men and horsemen, and Kir uncovered the shield.

7 And it shall come to pass, that thy choicest valleys shall be full of chariots, and the horsemen shall set themselves in array at the gate.

8 And he discovered the covering of Judah, and thou didst look in that day to the armour of the house of the forest.

9 Ye have seen also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many: and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool.

10 And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall.

11 Ye made also a ditch between the two walls for the water of the old pool: but ye have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long ago.

12 And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth:

13 And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die.

14 And it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

15 Thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, even unto Shebna, which is over the house, and say,

16 What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, as he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high, and that graveth an habitation for himself in a rock?

17 Behold, the LORD will carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and will surely cover thee.

18 He will surely violently turn and toss thee like a ball into a large country: there shalt thou die, and there the chariots of thy glory shall be the shame of thy lord's house.

19 And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall he pull thee down.

20 And it shall come to pass IN THAT DAY, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah:

~ Shebna, in verse fifteen, was the secretary of the treasury, and a cheap politician during Hezekiah's reign. Second Kings chapter eighteen verse eighteen tells us all about Shebna. Isaiah will speak of him again in chapter thirty-six. Interestingly, Shebna was building a tomb to perpetuate his name; but, ironically, he was to die and be buried in a far away, foreign land. Shebna is an adumbration of antichrist – but Eliakim, in verse twenty – is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ! Jesus told the church in Philadelphia that He had the key of David. Jesus opens the doors that no man could ever shut, friends; and visa versa. That's the way this so-called safari operates today. God has opened a tremendous door. I just happen to know this little rinky-dink ministry that most people pass by is extremely effective at reaching the world. I have myriad adversaries, to be sure; but they could

never close the door. God also told the church in Philadelphia that they have just a little strength. Well, that sure fits me; you may be absolutely sure. I don't get nearly the support most ministries and missionaries receive; in fact, I really don't get ANY support – and those others just don't do anything – let's keep this real. Well, God opened the door, and God Himself moves this safari along. Frankly, many people are looking to Shebna, the antichrist, and trusting Shebna, the antichrist – and they think Shebna, the antichrist — is Jesus Christ — but Shebna, the antichrist — is just another man-made nail that will soon fall to the floor and, that will be that for them, the end....

21 And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.

22 And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

23 And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house.

24 And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons.

25 In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the LORD hath spoken it ~

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