

THE JUDGMENT OF GOD

Today, there are nearly six billion people on planet Earth. I've read where there have been 77 billion people since Adam and Eve. And it's sobering to realize that every one of those 77 billion folks will stand in judgment before God, their Creator.

I've heard it said, "In the choir of life, it's easy to fake the words - but someday each of us will have to sing solo before God." Judgment Day will come for us all.

In Revelation 20 God judges the lost. In 1 Corinthians 3 Christ judges His own. In Revelation 2-3 we learn that not only are individuals judged, but God also judges churches. And in Isaiah 13-35 we discover that God judges nations. Isaiah records God's judgment on the nations surrounding Judah.

THE PRINCIPLE OF DUAL FULFILLMENT

There is a principle applicable to tonight's chapters known as *dual fulfillment*. Often in Old Testament prophecy the scope of the prediction transcends the situation at hand - and relates to future events - sometimes events still future - events that won't occur until the last days, before the second coming of Jesus.

In his book on the Old Testament, Philip Yancey, comments on this principle. He writes, "(the prophets) do not bother telling us whether the predicted events - *invasions, earthquakes, a coming leader, a recreated earth* - will occur next day, a thousand years later, or three thousand years later. In fact, near and distant predictions often appear in the same paragraph, blurring together."

To understand how the prophets saw future events, imagine a little boy lying on his back under a tall oak tree. He can see the limbs above him, but with no depth perception. Limbs separated by a dozens of feet look as if they're on top of each other. This is the way Isaiah saw the future. He intermixed events that came to pass immediately with events that wouldn't occur for thousands of years.

When the new bartender moved into the wild west town he was given instructions, "If Big John ever comes to town, run for your life. He's the meanest man west of the Mississippi River."

The bartender filed away the information...

Years later, a cowhand raced into the bar screaming, "Big John's a'coming. Big John's a'coming... everybody get out of town." The townsfolk scattered like a covey of quail. The bartender did too, but he was a little late. As he started out the door of the saloon he met a man in the doorway... the biggest, meanest, roughest man he'd ever seen. The burly man wore a black hat - rode into the bar on the back of a buffalo - in his hand was a rattle-snake, he cracked like a whip.

After knocking over a few tables, he slammed his hand on the bar breaking it in two, then asked for a bottle of sarsaparilla. The man bit off the top of the bottle with his teeth, and downed it in one guzzle. The bartender asked if he wanted another drink. That's when he told him, "*Sorry, I don't have time. Big John's a'coming!*"

The burly man on the buffalo was just a foreshadowing - a type - of a bigger bully on the horizon. *Big John's a'coming!* This is what we encounter in many Old Testament prophecies. The prophet's message has a two-fold fulfillment. There's an immediate answer, then there's a *later, larger* fulfillment yet to come.

That bit of insight will help us as we study tonight's chapters...

Devotion Box - Jesus the Tent Peg?

The last half of Isaiah 22 is God's judgment on a Jerusalem official. In his pride, a man named *Shebna* builds a mausoleum on his burial plot. The implication is that his role in Israel will be permanent, and he'll die a man of honor. But that's not the case. He'll be taken into exile, and replaced by a fellow named *Eliakim*. Verse 22-23 says of Eliakim, "The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; so he shall open, and no one shall shut; and he shall shut, and no one shall open." Eliakim will do the king's business and carry the king's authority.

Remember in Revelation 3:7 this verse is quoted in reference to Jesus. He likewise has the authority of a king - the eternal king - the king of Kings. Verse 23 also speaks of Jesus, "I will fasten him as a peg in a secure place, and he will become a glorious throne to his father's house." The "*peg*" is a tent-peg - a stake holds down the whole tent so it doesn't blow away in a stiff wind. Likewise the longevity of Israel is based on the faithfulness of Jesus. He is the tent-peg who sees to it that Israel endures the winds of persecution. Jesus is also our tent-peg. Fasten your life to Him, and He'll steady you through the storm!

Verse 25 speaks of the cross of Christ. It says about the tent peg, "In that day... the peg that is fastened in the secure place will be removed and be cut down and fall and the burden that was on it will be cut off..." Our sin was the burden laid on Jesus. When He died on the cross our sin was cut off.

Here are two questions: Are you fastened *by* the tent peg? Has your sin been fastened *to* the tent peg?

Bible Scan - Isaiah 13-39

KING OF BABYLON

Chapter 14 focuses on the King of Babylon at the time of the city's fall. Ultimately though, the person in view is not just Belshazzar – ancient Babylon's last monarch - or even a future character like Sadaam Hussein, or the antichrist. The real king of Babylon - the driving force behind the world's rebellion – the author of the false religion always associated with the city – is Satan.

Satan's judgment is described in ominous terms in 14:9, "Hell from beneath is excited about you, to meet you at your coming..." *What a thought!* Everyone the devil deceived and led into hell will rise up to meet him when he arrives.

Revelation 20 says that at the end of the Great Tribulation Satan will be bound in hell for a thousand years. When that day comes hell's inmates will look at the list of new arrivals and see that that Satan is scheduled to join them. They'll get excited! They'll finally get to vent their anger and wrath and frustration. Verse 10 records their taunts, "Have you also become as weak as we? Have you become like us? Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, and the sound of your stringed instruments; the maggot is spread under you, and worms cover you."

And that's when God takes us on a flashback. He recounts Satan's former glory, and how far he has fallen. Verse 12, "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" Satan did not begin as the epitome of evil. Ezekiel 28:14 says that he was once an "anointed cherub". He was the angel Lucifer. And he had a vital role in the worship of God. He was an *anointed* cherub. Ezekiel calls him "the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty".

We're wrong to think of Satan as a slimy creature in a red suit, with pointed ears and horns. He's a creature of

glamour. He can come to us today in the most attractive forms. He's the gorgeous blonde in the string bikini - the hip professor with his cool sounding arguments. Beware! Paul calls him "an angel of light."

One day hell will get excited. They'll greet him with the words, "How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!" Satan is now the weak one.

Isaiah goes back to the beginning – the angel Lucifer's colossal mistake. He says in verses 13-15, "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 on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'" Here are the five "*I wills*" of Satan.

Pride entered his heart. Remember, the middle letter in the word *sin* is "*I*". Satan wanted to exalt himself... to be like God. Yet God tells him in verse 15, "Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit." Jesus sentenced Satan on the cross, and when He returns He'll lock up the devil.

Verses 16-17 also speak of Satan, "Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, saying: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities...?' When Satan is finally forced out of the shadowy recesses in which he works into the light of day we'll be astonished. We'll be amazed that such a puny punk could've wreaked so much havoc. He was a defeated foe all along. We allowed him to work his mischief, because of our fear, and doubts, and lack of faith.

LIVING PARABLES

In chapter 20 Isaiah delivers a unique sermon. *Perhaps you've heard sermons on nudity, but this was a nude sermon.* The Lord tells Isaiah in verses 2-4,

"Go, and remove the sackcloth from your body, and take your sandals off your feet." And he did so, walking naked and barefoot. Then the LORD said, "Just as My servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and a wonder against Egypt and Ethiopia, so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians as prisoners and the Ethiopians as captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt."

Often the prophets acted out their messages – sometimes in bizarre fashion. They would preach in what we could call "*living parables*". Ezekiel laid on his side. Hosea married a prostitute. Paul bound himself with a belt. Here Isaiah walked naked for three years to communicate *the bare facts* to Egypt and Ethiopia.

For three years the prophet Isaiah wore nothing but his birthday suit as a warning to the nations in the Assyrian warpath. Because of their sin and idolatry, God will turn them over to the ruthless Assyrians who will ravage them, and take them away naked into slavery.

Devotion Box - Perfect Peace

Isaiah 26:3 tells us, "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You." Guys, *perfect peace* is not the absence of conflict and friction, but peace in the midst of that conflict. It's a peace that transcends circumstances - a spiritual tranquility that's unaffected by outward situations.

There's a seascape painting of a storm beating down on the seashore. Huge waves were crashing against the beach, while underneath an outcropping of rock sat a little bird perfectly contented, totally oblivious to the storm. The title of the painting was simply "*Peace*". That's the kind of peace God gives His people.

We hear a lot these days about *the peace process* – rounds and rounds of negotiations – near negligible compromise after negligible compromise. It's tedious, and laborious. But the peace God gives is not the result of a process. Perfect peace is God's gift to the heart that trusts in Him. You can't *work for or at* this kind of supernatural peace. All you can do is receive God's gift.

Guys, keep your mind focused on God, and He'll keep your heart flooded with His peace.

THE LITTLE APOCALYPSE

Chapters 24-27 are known as “*The Little Apocalypse*”. The judgments in these chapters and in chapters 34-35 are more global in scope, and parallel the book of Revelation. Isaiah 24:1 sets the tone, “Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty and makes it waste, distorts its surface and scatters abroad its inhabitants.”

Verses 19-20 speak of the cataclysmic upheaval that will take place in nature during this period. “The earth is violently broken, the earth is split open, the earth is shaken exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall totter like a hut...” Look at the cratered surface of the moon and you realize our solar system is not a peaceful place. Most of the meteorites that enter our atmosphere are burned up before they hit the ground – but what if God sends one a little larger?

I believe the earth is no stranger to global upheavals. Noah’s flood? The long day of Joshua? The extended shadow on Hezekiah’s sundial? All three events must have been caused by astronomical irregularities. In addition, all ancient civilizations had a 360 day year. Each month was exactly 30 days. Apparently the earth hasn’t always had a wobble. What kind of global catastrophe knocked our planet off its former axis? It seems to me that if these cataclysms occurred in the past, eventually they’ll occur in the future...

Chapters 34-35 go way beyond the scope of any historical local conflict. Here the prophet looks through the immediate to the future and final days of man.

Famous Old Testament scholars Kiel and Delitzsch said this about these chapters, “We feel that Isaiah is carried away from the stage of history, and is transported into the midst of the last things... he has broken away from his own time and the ‘end of all things’ have become more and more his home.”

Chapter 34 focuses on the final battle – “*the battle for*

Jerusalem”, or what’s also called “*the battle of Armageddon*”. And chapter 35 describes the Kingdom age Jesus will set up on planet Earth after the conclusion of the battle.

Notice the broad scope of the prophecy. Verse 2 tells us the whole world is a player, “the indignation of the LORD is against all nations...” Verse 4 implies both heaven and earth are the battlefield, “the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll”. Whatever happens will rock the planet globally, and alter our atmosphere. The host of heaven are astronomical projectiles – meteorites and comets and cosmic rocks. Verse 4 says they’ll pelt the earth like leaves falling from the vine.

This prompted Vance Havner to once say, “The day is coming when the most expensive piece of real estate on the planet will be a hole in the ground!”

Notice too, verse 5 says, blood will be shed in Bozrah and Edom – the region near the Dead Sea. Understand, the staging area for the battle of Jerusalem will be the Valley of Megiddo, but the fighting will stretch as far south as Bozrah. Remember too, that’s where the Jews, who fled from the Antichrist, will hold up – in Bozrah or Petra. And that’s where Jesus will finish slaughtering the wicked.

In the aftermath of God’s final judgments the earth will become desolate. But as Jesus builds His kingdom He’ll bring restoration. Isaiah 35:1 promises, “the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.” But that’s just the beginning... You think Jesus did miracles at His first coming, wait until His second coming... Verse 5 says He’ll open blind eyes, and deaf ears. Verse 6, “the lame shall leap like a deer”. The land will be rejuvenated. All Israel will be re-gathered.

Verse 10, “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.” Revelation 20 says when Jesus returns He’ll reign over the earth for a thousand years. It’ll be a *millennium of miracles*.

THE ASWAN DAM

Isaiah 19 is God’s judgment against an idolatrous Egypt. The first four verses depict the internal fighting that made Egypt easy pickings for the Assyrian army.

Verses 5-11 may have a more modern fulfillment. It predicts the demise of the Nile River. The river will turn foul - the fish will die - the ground made fertile by its overflowing banks will wither. Disaster will strike the Nile.

The Aswan Dam was built by Soviet engineers in 1960. The idea was to use the Nile to generate electricity, but what was first hailed as an engineering wonder became an ecological disaster. The dam ended up blocking huge amounts of silt that once filled the Nile. The silt fed the fish, and fertilized the surrounding soil, and blocked the salt water where the Nile emptied into the ocean. It’s been a disaster. The Egyptians should send a copy of Isaiah 19 to their Russian engineers.

ESCAPE TO PETRA

Isaiah 16 begins with a prophecy that has still future implications. A scenario is drawn where Moab becomes the protector of God’s people, the Jews. God says in verse 4, “Let My outcasts dwell with you, O Moab...”

In verse 1 the Jews send a peace offering from Sela to Mount Zion, and the ruler who has invaded the land. “*Sela*” is another name for the city of “*Petra*”, or “*Bozrah*”. And most of you have seen the city of Petra whether you knew it or not. If you watched the movie “*Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*”, the cave that held the grail was the façade at the city of Petra, in what is today the country of Jordan.

In Revelation 12 we’re told when the Antichrist invades Israel, and sets up his throne in the temple at Jerusalem, the Jews will flee into the wilderness. Isaiah 16 implies that the surviving Jews will hold up in the rock city of *Sela*, or *Petra*. The topography of Petra makes it easy to defend.

If you have questions on tonight's study email Pastor Sandy - sandyadams@calvarychapel.org
For back issues of Bible Scan study guides: www.calvarychapel.org/stonemountain/biblescan.htm

Calvary Chapel Announcements - November 12, 2000 -

Pick up a copy of November's monthly newsletter, LikeMinds.

Financial Faithfulness Seminar, Fri /Sat, 11/17-18 (check Announcement sheet flyer for details)

Ladies Christmas Tea, Sat 12/9, 2:00 pm - limited number of tickets available.

Calvary Café this Wednesday - Bible study by Paul Allen, special music by Sean McAuley

Next Bible Scan - November 19 - Isaiah 40-66

"You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You." - Isaiah 26:3

Bible Scan Memory Verse

LINE UPON LINE, PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT

A knowledge of God requires careful study and application of the Scripture. Understand, there are no shortcuts to spiritual growth. Romans 10:17 assures us that "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God".

You know the difference between strong tea and weak tea? It's the length of time the tea leaves are left in the water. Likewise the difference between a strong believer and a weak believer is the length of time they spend in God's Word.

Verse 10 tells us how the Bible should be studied, "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little." This is why Bible study demands a clear, unclouded mind - and a diligent effort. It has to be looked at in context - a word, a line, a precept at a time.

Notice Isaiah's comment "here a little, there a little". Have you noticed that the Bible is not arranged under neat headings, and specific topics. You can't turn to a

book on salvation, or a book that deals specifically with the rapture. All the vital doctrines of the church are spread out, and sprinkled throughout the book. To study any topic you have look for "here a little, there a little".

Chuck Missler has an interesting theory as to why this is so. He says the Bible is a wartime message system. When an army sends a radio communiqué to the frontlines it anticipates hostile jamming. It spreads the message over the entire bandwidth, so if a portion is intercepted the rest of the message can get through.

If God clumped all the salvation passages together, and part of the Bible was neglected, we'd be without the plan of salvation. That's why God spread it out from cover to cover - "here a little, there a little" - so that you could pick up the Bible in any place, and if you look hard enough, discern all you really need to know.

Your Bible is an amazing book - interwoven, supernaturally synchronized.

Devotion Box - Be Patient

Isaiah 30:18 tells us, "Blessed are all those who wait for Him..." It's been said, "Patience is letting your motor idle when you feel like peeling out." God doesn't promise to give us what we want when we want it. Sometimes we have to be patient. God's wristwatch is set to His time, not our time.

In fact, we're living in *the age of patience*. We live in a fallen world where many of God's promises are yet to be fulfilled. Life as a whole requires patience. In verse 21 God promises Israel that in the midst of their adversity, "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," God will not abandon them. The Holy Spirit will remind them of the truth they'd been taught.

Here's the lesson for us. Don't give up. Be patient and trust the Lord. In the Lord's timing you'll hear His words in your ears.

Devotion Box - The Danger of Complacency

Notice God's complaint in the Isaiah 32:9, "Rise up, you women who are at ease, hear my voice; you complacent daughters, give ear to my speech."

Apathy, complacency is always a problem. It's been said, "The # 1 problem today is complacency, but who really cares!"

I heard someone say of his church, "10% of the people want change. 10% resist change. And 80% just sit there." The crowd that just sits there may be the worst.

Do you care about what God cares about? Is your heart concerned with God's concerns? It should be!