

Isaiah 1 - 5:1-6

Last week we began this study on Isaiah by introducing the theme on Israel's apostasy from the faith of their father's, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Isaiah 1:4 ⁴ Alas, sinful nation, People weighed down with iniquity, Offspring of evildoers, Sons who act corruptly! They have abandoned the LORD, They have despised the Holy One of Israel, They have turned away from Him.

This same apostasy has reared its ugly head again among God's people, the church, which was prophesied by the apostles.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 ^{NAU} Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, ² that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³ Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

1 Timothy 4:1 ^{NAU} But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,

This falling away, or apostasy, is necessarily part of the actions of those who call themselves Christians. In those days, and what we can confidently say, are these days, many who are part of the organized church, are turning to doctrines of demons in favor of the truth of God's word.

And, according to what Paul tells us, this apostasy is a precursor to the return of the Lord in judgement, not only on the world, but also on the household of God, as the wheat and tares are separated on that day, of which Jesus Himself addresses.

Matthew 13:24-30 ²⁴ Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵ "But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶ "But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares

became evident also. ²⁷ "The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' ²⁸ "And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' The slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?' ²⁹ "But he said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰ 'Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

And so, what Paul and Jesus were addressing regarding the judgement of the world, including those who call themselves Christians who are part of that organization called, the church, Isaiah is addressing in the book that bears his name. There is nothing new under the sun.

But in the midst of the judgments promised to the nation of Israel, (again a picture of the established church of our day), God holds out hope for the remnant that He calls to Himself, and we see this at the end of the first chapter of Isaiah.

Isaiah 1:24-27 ²⁴ Therefore the Lord GOD of hosts, The Mighty One of Israel, declares, "Ah, I will be relieved of My adversaries And avenge Myself on My foes. ²⁵ "I will also turn My hand against you, And will smelt away your dross as with lye And will remove all your alloy. ²⁶ "Then I will restore your judges as at the first, And your counselors as at the beginning; After that you will be called the city of righteousness, A faithful city." ²⁷ Zion will be redeemed with justice And her repentant ones with righteousness.

As we look at this passage, what is the city of righteousness, the faithful city and Zion, as these Jews during Isaiah's time would have understood it?

Jerusalem.

Well, if Jerusalem is the city of righteousness, and we know that Jerusalem will never be righteous, in and of itself, then what could Isaiah possibly be talking about?

Revelation 21:1-2 ^{NAU} Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

It is this new Jerusalem, on the new earth, among the new heavens, where this righteousness will finally dwell forever.

2 Peter 3:13 ¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

So, when we read through the book of Isaiah we must understand that this is not a story about reviving the nation of Israel, but about reviving the people of God called the Israel of God, who will ultimately dwell with God as He dwells with us on the new earth in the new Jerusalem of which Isaiah speaks.

This was always what God's people have longed for going as far back as Adam and Eve who were promised a paradise restored to its original beauty and splendor in the presence of God.

So, let's move on in our text as we return to the God of Israel speaking words of judgment against a treasonous people.

Isaiah 2:1-4 ^{NAU} The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. ² Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. ³ And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ⁴ And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. *Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war.*

As long as we live in a sin filled and cursed world is it possible that war will not exist?

No. In fact, Jesus Himself tells us that this will go on to the end until He returns.

Matthew 24:3 ³ As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

What were the disciples asking?

Essentially, when will the end of the world and the judgment of the world come to pass when your return?

And how does Jesus answer?

Matthew 24:4-13 ⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. ⁵ "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. ⁶ "***You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end.*** ⁷ "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. ⁸ "But all these things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs. ⁹ "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. ¹⁰ "At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹ "Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. ¹² "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. ¹³ "But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

Well, if wars and nation coming against nation will be the norm until the end, how do we explain what Isaiah says?

Isaiah 2:4 ⁴ And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war.

This is the new earth of which Isaiah makes plain toward the end of this book.

Isaiah 65:17-19 ¹⁷ "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. ¹⁸ "But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem *for* rejoicing And her people *for* gladness. ¹⁹ "I will also rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in My people; And there will no longer be heard in her The voice of weeping and the sound of crying.

Where do we see this same language in the New Testament?

^{NAU} **Revelation 21:4** and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

So, clearly, Isaiah understood, at least to the degree that he was writing these things that he knew were not part of the present Jerusalem and the nation of Israel, and could never be fulfilled in the present Jerusalem in a world where sin still existed.

Sin and the curse would have to be eliminated for there no longer to be heard in Jerusalem the voice of weeping and the sound of crying. Isaiah would have understood this.

Isaiah 2:5-7 ⁵ Come, house of Jacob, and let us walk in the light of the LORD. ⁶ For You have abandoned Your people, the house of Jacob, Because they are filled *with influences* from the east, And *they are* soothsayers like the Philistines, And they strike *bargains* with the children of foreigners. ⁷ Their land has also been filled with silver and gold And there is no end to their treasures; Their land has also been filled with horses And there is no end to their chariots.

Is this a picture of a nation that seems to have been abandoned by God, at least from the world's perspective?

Absolutely not. In fact, as the world would look upon Israel, and as Israel saw herself, they would see a nation that was flourishing, but as Jesus would say years later, it was a nation full of dead men's bones.

And this nation, during Isaiah's time, who has abandoned God in favor of idols, though they see themselves as flourishing, are promised by God that there will be judgment.

Isaiah 2:18-21 ¹⁸ But the idols will completely vanish. ¹⁹ *Men* will go into caves of the rocks And into holes of the ground Before the terror of the LORD And the splendor of His majesty, When He arises to make the earth tremble. ²⁰ In that day men will cast away to the moles and the bats Their idols of silver and their idols of gold, Which they made for themselves to worship, ²¹ In order to go into the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs Before the terror of the LORD and the splendor of His majesty, When He arises to make the earth tremble.

Here Isaiah makes the case that the idols will completely vanish, but he seems to include not only Israel, but also the entire world into the same category, where all will be judged.

But again, look closely at the language of Isaiah. What day do you think is he talking about where the Lord arises to make the earth tremble?

Revelation 6:15-17 ¹⁵ Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; ¹⁶ and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; ¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

This is what Isaiah is prophesying. Again, to lose sight of this and assume that he is speaking about reestablishing the nation of Israel once again, where God will set up a kingdom on earth for a thousand years, only to have it rebel one last time before the final judgment, is to miss the point of what God has planned.

There has only been one Israel from day one, and that is the Israel of God who were called out to be God's chosen, starting with Adam and Eve.

The name Israel could be literally translated, he has striven with God, thus some would extrapolate that to mean, governed by God.

Adam, after given the promise by God to have the seed of the woman be his savior, strove with God all the days of his life, and thus he was governed by God all his days. All who followed him in his faith would have the same designation given to them. Though the name Israel would not be officially given to a called out group for years to come, all the saints of old were Israel, even as the saints today are Israel.

Romans 2:28-29 ²⁸ For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. ²⁹ But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

So, as we continue in the book of Isaiah the theme is quite apparent and the images of Israel under judgment takes on a broader image of the world and a household to come under God's wrath, with its final expression on the great day of God's wrath.

And so, when Isaiah promises that God will judge Israel, this does not mean that there won't be an actual judgment of an actual nation

called Israel. In fact, it will be this judgment where they will be finally judged as both Assyria and Babylonia take them captive because of their sin.

Isaiah 3:16-26 ¹⁶ Moreover, the LORD said, "Because the daughters of Zion are proud And walk with heads held high and seductive eyes, And go along with mincing steps And tinkle the bangles on their feet, ¹⁷ Therefore the Lord will afflict the scalp of the daughters of Zion with scabs, And the LORD will make their foreheads bare." ¹⁸ In that day the Lord will take away the beauty of *their* anklets, headbands, crescent ornaments, ¹⁹ dangling earrings, bracelets, veils, ²⁰ headdresses, ankle chains, sashes, perfume boxes, amulets, ²¹ finger rings, nose rings, ²² festal robes, outer tunics, cloaks, money purses, ²³ hand mirrors, undergarments, turbans and veils. ²⁴ Now it will come about that instead of sweet perfume there will be putrefaction; Instead of a belt, a rope; Instead of well-set hair, a plucked-out scalp; Instead of fine clothes, a donning of sackcloth; And branding instead of beauty. ²⁵ Your men will fall by the sword And your mighty ones in battle. ²⁶ And her gates will lament and mourn, And deserted she will sit on the ground.

This is the beginning of the judgment that Isaiah will expound upon in the rest of this book. But as we'll see Isaiah also continues to return to the theme that in the midst of such judgment there will be the hope for the remnant. And so we see both Judgment then Deliverance. But this deliverance points not to a return to a Jerusalem that is temporal but to a Jerusalem that is eternal.

Isaiah 4:1-6 ^{NAU} For seven women will take hold of one man in that day, saying, "We will eat our own bread and wear our own clothes, only let us be called by your name; take away our reproach!" ² In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth *will be* the pride and the adornment of the survivors of Israel. ³ It will come about that he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy--everyone who is recorded for life in Jerusalem. ⁴ When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and purged the bloodshed of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning, ⁵ then the LORD will create over the whole area of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a canopy. ⁶ There will be a shelter to *give* shade from the heat by day, and refuge and protection from the storm and the rain.

Even if God would restore Jerusalem, which he actually does when a remnant of the Jews are allowed to return to the land under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, to suggest that this return would be as glorious as what Isaiah describes, simply doesn't understand what Isaiah is teaching.

Isaiah 4:5 ⁵ then the LORD will create over the whole area of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a canopy.

How does that read in some of your bibles?

^{NET} **Isaiah 4:5** Then the LORD will create over all of Mount Zion and over its convocations a cloud and smoke by day and a bright flame of fire by night; indeed a canopy will accompany the LORD's glorious presence.

There is a picture in the New Testament of what Isaiah refers to.

Revelation 21:23-27 ²³ And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp *is* the Lamb. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. ²⁵ In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; ²⁶ and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; ²⁷ and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, ***but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.***

Look at Isaiah 4:3 again and compare it with Rev.21:27.

Isaiah 4:3 ³ It will come about that he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy-- ***everyone who is recorded for life in Jerusalem.***

The Zion and Jerusalem of which Isaiah speaks is the same Zion and Jerusalem of which John speaks, and both are the New Jerusalem where Christ is the light and in which righteousness dwells.

In chapter 5 Isaiah paints another picture of God's people and how they continue to rebel against Him.

Isaiah 5:1-6 ^{NAU} Let me sing now for my well-beloved A song of my beloved concerning His vineyard. My well-beloved had a vineyard on a fertile hill. ² He dug it all around, removed its

stones, And planted it with the choicest vine. And He built a tower in the middle of it And also hewed out a wine vat in it; Then He expected *it* to produce *good* grapes, But it produced *only* worthless ones. ³ "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, Judge between Me and My vineyard. ⁴ "What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why, when I expected *it* to produce *good* grapes did it produce worthless ones? ⁵ "So now let Me tell you what I am going to do to My vineyard: I will remove its hedge and it will be consumed; I will break down its wall and it will become trampled ground. ⁶ "I will lay it waste; It will not be pruned or hoed, But briars and thorns will come up. I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on it."

Why do you suppose a vineyard that God planted would produce a worthless crop?

Because even if God has planted a vineyard, the crop was tainted from the beginning and the seed was dead.

So, how does God get a crop that will flourish and come to life?

Mark 12:1-11 ^{NAU} And He began to speak to them in parables: "A man PLANTED A VINEYARD AND PUT A WALL AROUND IT, AND DUG A VAT UNDER THE WINE PRESS AND BUILT A TOWER, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey. ² "At the *harvest* time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, in order to receive *some* of the produce of the vineyard from the vine-growers. ³ "They took him, and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ⁴ "Again he sent them another slave, and they wounded him in the head, and treated him shamefully. ⁵ "And he sent another, and that one they killed; and *so with* many others, beating some and killing others. ⁶ "He had one more *to send*, a beloved son; he sent him last *of all* to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ⁷ "But those vine-growers said to one another, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours!' ⁸ "They took him, and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. ⁹ "What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vine-growers, and will give the vineyard to others. ¹⁰ "Have you not even read this Scripture: 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER *stone*'; ¹¹ THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES '?"

God has a vineyard and all who fall on the chief cornerstone will grow in this vineyard with the Son who was slain, but rose again, as He will rule and reign with His crop, His people, forever more.

You and I are that crop and Isaiah is too. He along with all whom God prunes and waters with the Spirit of God, who gives life, will share in this vineyard, this land of milk and honey, this new earth that God has promised to those who love Him.