

Isaiah Chapter 5- John Karmelich

Title: "I've done all THIS for you, and this is the thanks I get?!"

I'm aware that most people who study the Bible believe devoutly in God and want to use their lives for the purposes of making a difference for Him! In this chapter, Isaiah is pretty much "pounding a pulpit" on the dangers of turning from God. We realize God is trying His best to tell people He desires we use our lives for His glory and there's a danger to turn from Him! In short, Chapter 5 is a love letter God is sending to people He's called to be His people. Obviously, those living in Israel then we're messing up badly or else God through Isaiah would not have to preach this intensely! The question for us who take God seriously is what's the lesson for us? The big answer is, "Heaven is not an exclusive club, as if we should preach, I'm in, you're not, that's your problem"! The truth is He saved us not to ignore Him until we get to heaven, but to use our lives to draw others to Him. He doesn't disclose who's saved and who's not, so our role is to be a witness to all people! That doesn't mean the word Jesus must come out of our mouth ever sentence, but a loving attitude should be prevalent in our lives!

I realize all too well, I'm preaching to the choir again. To give one of my favorite quotes on witnessing for Jesus, "If they won't listen to Jesus, give them Moses!" Got that from the late Walter Martin. What the point of that message is people **MUST** learn what is the danger of turning from God. He calls all of us to use our lives to be witnesses for Him! It also means preaching of the danger of ignoring Him! As I state a lot, it's not our job to convert people, just to be a good witness for Him! Every now and then it is important to consider the ways God has blessed our lives. With that said, time to focus on Chapter 5 and what it's meant to teach all of us.

Remember Chapter 5 is the final chapter (chapter numbers were added about 1200AD) of a speech that Isaiah is giving from Chapter 2 to Chapter 5. For my newcomers, Isaiah lived about 700BC. Chapter 5 is in effect a long poem focused on God saying, "Realize just how much I have blessed your lives! All I ask in return is gratitude and use your lives as a witness for Me". In my devotional time this morning, I studied a Psalm that focused on ways God blessed the Nation of Israel before they entered that land. I paused to consider why I should be grateful for that? I realized if God did not do all those miracles, we never would have known just what the Bible teaches about the Exodus! Our salvation's an exodus from the world, so the Israelites did an exodus from the world (Egypt in particular), to start a nation to being a witness for God.

In effect that's the ideal description of Chapter 5. In essence God is saying "I did all of this for you and all I ask in return is to live your lives as a witness for Me!" When you study this chapter and see all the ways God is describing how He put the Israelites in the land and the woes He put on them, obviously it is important to take inventory of our lives. If we are using our lives to make a difference for Him, then I would also say these warnings are to share with nonbelievers. (That's back to an if they won't listen to Jesus, give them Moses concept!) I realize God expects us to provide for ourselves and our loved ones! God doesn't "rain down food" as He expects us to use the gifts He provides (land, water, etc.) to live so again we can use our lives to make a difference for Him!

As I love to say, "now for the details": God refers to the land of Israel which were split into 2 different kingdoms when Isaiah wrote this, and he mentions both. God compares that land to a fruitful vineyard! The bible is very against getting drunk but not against drinking wine! As I stated in previous lessons, I am positive Jesus drank wine at the last supper and not fresh grape juice, as grapes are harvested some

months after the time of the last supper! The first seven verses referring Israel to a vineyard. That's not any type of reference to drinking wine, but an illustration that God put Israel in a spot on earth where it can be used to grow things! In Verse 7 it says God looked for justice but found bloodshed! Remember God is a god of vengeance as well as a God of love! That just means God cares about justice for people who can't get it from say a court system!

The condemnation continues in Verse 8 and continues to the end of the chapter. God condemns people who build large estates at the expense of hurting people! Let me make something clear: God does not condemn financial success! People who are successful that way are good at making money, but it does not reflect their character (good or bad) based on how much money one has! The condemnation in this chapter's not about one's amount of wealth but about failing to be a witness for Him! Realize the North Israel Kingdom was conquered shortly after Isaiah wrote this. The Southern Kingdom one existed for a little over 100 years after Isaiah wrote this. My point is the Israelites failed to heed God's warning, and suffered as they didn't change despite the warnings of Isaiah and other prophets! This is the first of six "woes" we get in this chapter!

Okay too bad for them! It is ancient history. What does any of this got to do with me, as I assume my readers are already devout Christians! First, I never believe one can sin enough to lose one's salvation. The issue isn't salvation, per se, but being a witness for God! Christianity isn't an exclusive club for us to think, "I'm in, you're not and that's your problem!" God didn't save us to only care about our self, but to use our lives for His glory. As I stated earlier, He is aware we must earn a living and take care of our loved ones! We can be a good witness for Jesus doing that! Sharing what eternally awaits anyone who rejects Jesus should be part of living the Christian life! I realize that I'm beating this point to death, but we need regular reminders why God saved us to begin with!

This chapter has six specific woes: Obviously it's not a complete list of sins but just here as example of signs we're not living as God intends us to live. The first was getting rich, at the expense of hurting the innocent. The second condemns getting drunk. The implication for Verses 11-12 is that people care far more about "having a good time" (drinking, partying), then caring what God thinks about their lives. It is important to add I'm not against celebrating something significant in one's life. The issue is what do we "live for"!

Verses 13-15 get into the consequences of what's coming. The false view is "We're God's chosen so He would never harm us or kick us out of here since we're saved no matter what!" I realize we know good people who've suffered horribly! This chapter is not saying if we fail to live as He desires, then it is for certain we will suffer! The issue is corporate punishment: If a group fails to be a witness for Him, that could be the end of a church or a country. I realize every disaster requires analysis of what happened. I am just saying Isaiah is warning them, "You want to know the problem, look in the mirror!" Verses 16-17 is the reminder God will win in the end so we might as well be on the winning team!

The next "woe" is Verse 18. In essence it's about lying before the authorities find out! The next "woe" is Verse 20. It is like lying in that it is about deceit and calling "bad good and vice-versa". We may be thinking that's not me, which is good news. Think in terms of being a witness for God and being in the situation where we realize what's bad and being willing to be bold for Jesus. Whenever I pray for those who are on the "front lines" for Jesus, I like to pray for boldness for them! To quote a former pastor of mine, "We either should be on the front line firing the bullets or in the back providing the prayer needs for those on the front lines!"

Verse 21 is about pride. That's often considered the source of sin, as our pride wants one thing while it is the will of God to want something else. That's "Woe #5". Number 6 in effect gets back to those who are big on "partying" in that they brag about how much they can drink! Again, this isn't designed to be a complete list of sins, just examples of not being a good witness for God.

The last part of the chapter and the end of this four-chapter speech is describing the destruction coming to the land of Israel by the Assyrians to the North and the Babylonians to the South. The fact it did come true as Isaiah called it establishes him as a prophet. It's part of the bible to remind us God isn't to be messed with as major consequences do come eternally for those who choose to ignore Him. I realize I'm preaching to the choir about obedience. The challenge is we must remind ourselves to use our lives as a witness for Him despite whatever we're dealing with at this moment!

With that said, hope you like this study. I wrote a more detailed one some years back. If you want to read that, click on one of the links below. It is still a joy to study this stuff and again I'm grateful for you reading this. The rest of this email is links to questions you may have. If you're new here, you're always welcome to e-mail me. Thanks again for reading this!

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