

Isaiah Chapters 2-4 - John Karmelich

Title: How God motivates us!

First, Chapters 2 through 5 are one vision. Chapter 5 is unique enough that I want to take that on in the next lesson alone. As to Chapters 2-4, they give good news about God's eternal plan for us, a lecture on the Revelation bad stuff (for a lack of a better term), and finally on why God's withholding blessing for His people. It leads to the question, why do we suffer in this life? A famous saying is: The only people I know who are happy are people I don't know very well! There are some who're successful financially and do not appear to be having problems. That just means we don't know enough about them to realize what problems they're dealing with! For most of us, we struggle with problems because we don't know the outcome! Of course, Christians believe in an eternity that we get to share with Jesus. We all accept the Revelation "bad stuff" as future fact, and for us "pre-trib" types, (those who believe the church will be gone before all that takes place), hopefully our loved ones get saved before all that takes place.

The one thing I know for sure is God cares about having a relationship with us! Since God's loving, He desires something to express that love upon and whether we like it or not, He picked us! In return God wants us to be grateful for the price He paid for that love and He's doing all He can to motivate us to be a good witness for Him. That's why Chapters 2-5 is full of positive promises to a believer and warns of the danger of not letting Him guide our lives. You may be thinking, I am already committed to serving Him, why should I read further? The correct answer is we easily lose our focus and daily motivation to remember why God saved us in the first place, helps us to keep our focus on Him. With that speech out of my system, realize these chapters are part of a vision designed for the purpose of understanding how God motivates us!

OK then, time to summarize these three chapters. Realize it is for the Southern (Israelite) Kingdom of Judah that existed when Isaiah wrote this. Israel had two separate kingdoms then, and Isaiah is writing to the Southern One. Of course, the bible has lessons for us from this. I'd argue that if the Bible is only to teach us history, it's pretty much a waste of time!

Chapter 2 focuses on a speech about a future day when Jesus returns to rule the world from Jerusalem. Passages like this make me ponder how it'd work practically! The text says people will desire to travel to Israel to see Him! I think about whether there will be angels to control traffic? Will they walk up or is there a line of cars? The truth is, we don't know! Since the Second Coming is future, why bring it up 2,700 years ago and counting? One word: Motivation. As one of my mentors says, "If the Evangelical Christians are right, the Jews win. If we religious Jews are correct, we win too!" (Dennis Prager). God "hangs that over our head" to remind us what the eternal future will bring! That means God wants us to use our lives to glorify Him as He will win in the end! Isaiah states lots of predictions in this book that did come true in and near his lifetime to verify, he is a prophet!

Chapter 2 verses 1-5 focus on that future event. It states Jesus will judge between nations and His laws will be enforced! I always say God's laws are the best way to live, but without the Spirit guiding us, we can't live as He desires. Bottom line His laws will be enforced, and I suspect our role then is to enforce it upon those living when Jesus returns! Isaiah ends this 5-verse section by encouraging Jewish people living at that time to live as God desires.

Then Isaiah moves into a speech about the Revelation "bad stuff", again for a lack of a better term! So why get into that if again it's future to them and us? As I like to say God likes a "carrot and stick" type of motivation. (If you don't know that refers to motivating animals that work for us!) We get the carrot in Verses 1-5. The rest of the Chapter is the "stick"! Yes, there is a lot more "condemnation verses", as God knows that usually motivates us better! Remember these chapters are written for Israel. In effect, they are saying judgment day is coming and failing to be a witness for Me (God) is why I'm having the big "wrap up event" (i.e., the bad stuff of Revelation) so it'll be obvious to the whole world God should not be messed with! Okay we get the idea, now a few words on the rest of Chapter 2:

One gets the impression reading Chapters 2-4 that their economy was good at that time. Verses here do imply or state that people had it good financially at that moment! At the same time, those living in that land were ignoring God and worshiping "anything and everything". It ties to Chapter 1 as they're guilty of "doing church rituals" but their hearts were elsewhere! Realize the chapter indicates the whole world will feel the effect of "Revelation", but Isaiah's emphasizing the Jewish nation's guilty for turning from God (another reason to not be around when this occurs!). In short, God hangs all this over our heads to say in effect live as He desires as bad stuff's coming! This section has a reference to world leaders who hide in caves to protect themselves from all that (similar to Revelation 6:15). We get a lot more details here than in Revelation, but bottom line, it's bad news to not live as God desires!

One thing to remember about bible future predictions is God likes to work in patterns. For example, we see a relatively short-term fulfillment would be when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem a little over 100 years after Isaiah wrote this. The long-term fulfillment is all that Revelation bad stuff! Life will be an "every man (and woman) for themselves" due to shortages and a lack of leadership! Isaiah refers to Jerusalem as Sodom (anything goes...think the worst)! People will take advantage of others. Let's just say it's all bad news in this section!

In the later part of Chapter 3, the focus is on the women. Remember I said they were prosperous at that time! Isaiah gets colorful describing women showing off their possessions trying to attract men! What the text is implying is there is a shortage of men (lost in fighting wars) so women are desperate to have a man say to have children! Chapter 4 says in effect, "Women are providing for themselves and want a man for protection and to have children!" In short Isaiah is predicting women going from having it all, to being desperate to find a man to marry!

The good news is the last part of Chapter 4 goes "full circle". It describes those who survive all this are going to be called holy (to be separated for God's use!). That's how we know this is more than stating a description of life after the Babylonian captivity, roughly 600BC, about 100-years after Isaiah wrote all this). That's why I preach bible prophesy is often double fulfillment! The short-term fulfillment shows that Isaiah is a prophet. The long term gives a glimpse of life right before Jesus returns!

Okay, now that I scared everyone half to death, let me give a little more good news. If we're trusting in Jesus for our salvation, I'm convinced we'll be out of here before all this takes place. Even if I'm wrong about that, what's a few years of horrible times compared to eternity with Jesus in heaven? Remember God's main motivation for going both positive and negative is to get us to be a good witness for Him. I know most of us are already devout Christians. It's important not to think, "I'm IN you're not and that's your problem!" I realize only God can save a person. He calls us to be a witness for Him and to use our lives as a witness for Him!

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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