

Isaiah Chapters 28-29 Summary - John Karmelich

Title: How God wants Christians to deal with non-believers!

This morning, I read the parable Jesus told of four different types of soil. I'd argue the point is three of four who hear the Gospel message won't use their lives in the long term for Jesus. They'll either reject His Word completely or turn from the Christian life! I opened with that thought as Jesus quotes Isaiah here in these chapters. These chapters talk about the nation of Israel, divided into 2 kingdoms when the book of Isaiah was written (about 700BC). Isaiah refers to the Israelites as a bunch of drunks ignoring what God's doing in that moment in history! I realize, I'm preaching to those who believe Jesus is God and for the most part these chapters don't apply to us. The question I pondered in these chapters is what does God want us to do with those who refuse to believe in Jesus or care about God? As I preach all of time in these lessons, God calls us to be a witness to all people because we don't know who'll be saved. God never designed Christianity to be a club to proclaim, "I'm in, you are not and that's your problem"! My pastor once said unsaved people literally must walk over Jesus to go to hell! It reminds me of what God calls us to do, be a witness for Him. Isaiah preached to a nation that pretty much ignored him. As most of us realize, we don't get "points" for everyone we save! Our job's to be a witness for Jesus. God through the Holy Spirit is who convicts people of sin.

I realize that's old news for most of us. Reading about Isaiah "preach as if nothing else matters" even if most reject His message of repentance reminds us what we're called to do as believers! When we study these two chapters and read about Israel's collective failure to heed his warning, the message for us is a reminder that we too are to be a witness for Jesus, whether people change or not! Going back to Jesus' parable of the "four soils" some do get it so in effect our efforts are never a waste of time! Specifically, these chapters condemn the Israelites for being more focused on drinking alcohol, than God in much of this text. Obviously not every single person there was drunk. The underlying point is the Israelites did only focus on enjoying their lives and ignoring the big why God made them in the first place. As we go through these two chapters, don't think "Too bad for them"! Realize we're called, like Isaiah, to preach and be a living witness for Him! OK enough guilt for the opening section, time to summarize the text!

First remember Isaiah lived in Jerusalem which was part of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The North one was called Israel, and they were close to going into captivity when Isaiah wrote this! He calls those living in the Northern Kingdom a "bunch of drunks" to start Chapter 28. The key point is the Israelites in the Northern Kingdom had an "eat drink and be merry" attitude. They ignored His warnings of what was about to occur (their destruction)! They either thought, "We're God's people so we're safe, or doom is coming so we might as well live it up!" I read that it was a prosperous time when they got conquered by the Assyrian Empire (based out of Iraq today)! The message for us is God called us to be witnesses for Him just as Isaiah was even though no one listened to Him. Again, we're not blessed based on how many people we save, we are to do what God calls us to do! (I always encourage people to pray about what God specifically wants that if you are not sure what God desires of your life at this moment!)

Anyway, Isaiah says the priests there were as bad as everyone else there. The point being the kingdom of Israel ignored what God called them to do. Isaiah uses a phrase several times "line upon line". That phrase (extended in the text) is intended as "I'm keeping my Godly message simple as you do not want to hear the truth of what He desires and now you'll suffer for it!" By Verse 11, Isaiah is stating, they'll have to obey people they don't understand (Assyrian conquerors), since they refuse to listen to God!

Then Isaiah switches focus to the Southern Kingdom! They feared the Assyrians too, but they thought it's too late, we're going down for the count! Isaiah reassures them of God's unconditional promise: He will rule there one day no matter what! If you don't know, God saved the Southern Kingdom from that invasion (to be discussed later in this book). However, the "South" did fall to Babylonian Empire later in history (after Isaiah's day) in effect for ignoring God as well!

Isaiah gives some basic "farming illustrations" (they were an agricultural society) as if to say you know how to properly farm, but don't know how to obey God! He gives us wisdom how to do what's right. It is up to us to apply that wisdom. Failure to use our lives for His glory was their downfall! Hopefully if we study our bible, we can apply the wisdom it teaches and not repeat their mistakes! Will we suffer in this lifetime? Of course, God allows us to go through trials in effect to draw us closer to Him and teach us to trust Him through such trials.

In Chapter 29, Isaiah makes it clear this warning is to the Southern Kingdom as well. He refers to those in Jerusalem (capital of the South) and warns of an invading army surrounding that city as Ariel, which means "Lion of God" a reference to the fact David was called to be the first great king there. It is about the fact God called the Israelites to be His witness to the world! Isaiah states the fact the Assyrian army will one day surround Jerusalem but as Isaiah will state later, won't fire one arrow in that city, as God's going to wipe them out before they do damage. Yes, that city was conquered about 100 years later, for failing to be a witness for God but I'm beating that point to death by now!

Then Isaiah makes the point that Jerusalem not only will be conquered but there will be a day when the whole world will fight against Jerusalem (end time prediction)! I believe Jerusalem holds the record of the most times a city has been attacked/conquered in human history! A famous line stated a generation ago at the United Nations, "Can we talk about anything else other than Israel for a change?" Whether it is a popular message or not, God picked Jerusalem to be the world capital when Jesus rules, so that city will always be a center of controversy as Satan is always focused on delaying that as long as possible!

Isaiah sticks to his "doom and gloom" message to finish the chapter. (Isaiah will pretty much stay on a negative message until he changes tone in Chapter 40 to give us all the hope we need!) By Verse 11 he gets into your "heart's not in it" sermon which is the danger of going through the religious motions, but we are not "putting our heart where our mouth is"! By Verse 14 we get another reminder that God will save Israel one day so His plan to rule the world from Israel will happen. We can bank on it as much as all the other Bible predictions that have come true to date! We get a famous, "God is the potter and we are the clay speech" which essentially means God created the world so He can do with it as He desires. Was it His desire for multitudes to die as tragically as that happened? The point is evil and sin exist, so people suffer due to that. All we can do is make the best decision we can and deal with life the best we can as we continue to be a witness for God!

Bottom line, there will be a happy ending one day for those of us who have put our faith the fact Jesus is God, and we are trusting in His sin payment for our lives. The classic question for us who believe it is what are we doing about it? God called those Israelites to be His witness just as He's calling us. No, I don't believe we can lose our salvation but yes, I know many people who've lost their ability to be the type of witness God wanted them to be. In other words, there's a limit to His patience just as Israel did learn back then when Isaiah preached on their short and long-term future! OK, that is enough guilt for the week. Hopefully you get the point of this message, and we use our lives as God intends us to use it for His glory!

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, realize you're always welcome to e-mail me. Thanks again for reading this!

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That's it. Hope you enjoy it. Don't forget to fire up a prayer prior to your reading.