

The LORD Is Going to Lay Waste the Earth

Isaiah 24:1-13

Facilitator: Louise P. McQueen

I. Historical & Biblical Context

- A. The LORD is righteous, and He never goes back on His promises. Yet instead of turning to Him, people look to others for wisdom, riches, protection, etc. God is so good that He gives every person, good or bad, rich or poor, the opportunity to repent and accept Him and His Son. God's ways are higher than man's ways, when He is reaching out to His people, they should accept His calling. He wants us just the way we are, in whatever shape we are in, and once we have accepted Him, then He will begin to work in our lives and guarantee eternal life for His Saints.
- B. Following oracles about the Lord's judgment on various nations comes this prophecy about the end times. Isaiah looked toward the LORD's final judgment of the entire earth for human sinfulness in the last days. This section is often called the "Little Apocalypse" because it looks beyond the immediate judgment of Israel's Gentile neighbors to the final judgments of the Tribulation Period and the ushering in of the Messianic Kingdom. This is a terrifying vision of what is to come.

II. The Lesson: The LORD Is Going to Lay Waste the Earth

1. **vv. 1-3.** "Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty"

Isaiah invited us to behold the scene of God's judgment. The principles revealed here apply universally to the judgment of God. The ultimate fulfillment will be in the ultimate period of judgment, the time of the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21-22), which will immediately precede the second coming of Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:29-30). In no other period of history (past or future) of the world will there be so much suffering and universal destruction as during

the seven years called the Great Tribulation. Those years will be fraught with wrath (Ezek. 7:19), judgment (Rev. 14:7; 15:4; 16:5 & 7), darkness (Joel 2:2; Amos 5:18), trouble (Jer. 30:7), suffering (Is. 24:20-21), desolation (Dan. 9:27), gloominess (Amos 5: 20), indignation (Is. 26:20-21; 34:1-3, and sorrow. During the time of the Great Tribulation, God will pour out His wrath on mankind and will judge all of creation just before the peace of the Millennium is ushered in.

Isaiah showed that all stations or positions in life will not protect anyone from judgment. God is no respecter of person (Rom. 2:11). All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). In God's eyes, the lowest and highest members of society are equally guilty. No class of people will be immune from the general judgment of the LORD. Therefore, it makes sense for God to remove His redeemed before the period of Great Tribulation so that only those who do not trust in Him during this time have to suffer under this judgment. If Christians do not realize that they will be taken out of the world before the Great Tribulation begins, they could become very discouraged.

2. **vv. 4-6.**

The earth mourns because in the Great Tribulation, the earth will be terribly afflicted by the judgments of the LORD (Rev. 8:7-13). Man has defiled the earth with his sin and wickedness. God set boundaries for us, but many of us do not want to see or respect God's boundaries. Some of us feel we do not have to respect God's boundaries because we can make our own and live by them. Humans are also ripe for judgment because we have changed God's Word into something lighter or more acceptable. Once it was universally recognized that it was wrong to lie, cheat, be sexually immoral, change the Word of God by replacing it with substitutes and to be wrong to do so many things. But today, all of that is approved and celebrated. Every time a preacher soft-peddles the Gospel or a politician twists the Scriptures to get a rise in opinion polls, they become ripe for God's judgment.

God entered into several covenants with man, and man turned his back on His covenants. Instead of receiving God's everlasting covenant, man made up his own way without God (Jer. 31-34; 32:40). When Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, they broke the covenant with God. Ever since then, there has been a curse on the earth (Gen. 3:17).

3. **vv. 7-13.**

When the LORD brings the judgment of the Great Tribulation, there will be no more partying as usual. The days for eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage (Matthew 24:38) were before the Great Tribulation. All the extravagant living in the world will stop. During this time, God's destruction will be everywhere. The judgment will be so complete that the cities will look like bare olive trees and grape vines stripped of everything.

God's judgment is often compared to purging, whether it is pulling out the tares (Matthew 24:38) or separating goats from sheep (Mt. 25:31-33). God is never punishing just to cause harm; He is intentionally removing what is bad so that He can elevate that which is good.

III. Conclusion

In this chapter, Isaiah made it clear that God is the single and sovereign force that governs all humanity, and they should place their hope in Him. All of creation will wither away in a trumpet's sound. In God is complete control of time, space and matter. He created it all!

The Great Tribulation

In Christianity, the Tribulation refers to a prophesied period of severe hardship and divine judgment described in the Bible, particularly in the New Testament's book of Revelation. This period is characterized by a sequence of catastrophic events such as widespread wars, devastating natural disasters, famines and plagues. The Tribulation serves multiple purposes in biblical

prophecy. It is a time of judgment for the wicked and unrepentant, a period of purification for God's people and an opportunity for the final outpouring of God's grace through evangelism. The culmination of the Tribulation is the return of Jesus Christ to earth, defeating the antichrist and establishing His millennial reign. The action of desecration by Antiochus that Daniel predicted will now be repeated in the future by the Antichrist as the signal of the beginning of the Great Tribulation.

Abomination of Desolation

The abomination of desolation refers to Daniel 9:27, 11:31; 12:11; where Antiochus Epiphanes' profanation of the Jewish temple worship would foreshadow a similar and more severe act. In 168 BC, the Greek king Antiochus (an-TAI-uh-kuhs) IV Epiphanes (eh-PIHF-uh-neeZ) invaded Jerusalem and captured the city. He marched into the Jewish temple, erected a statue of the Greek god Zeus, and sacrificed a pig on the altar of incense. This provoked a revolt in Judea as the Jews fought to remove Antiochus' sacrilege from the temple. Under the leadership of the Maccabees, the Jews drove Antiochus and his army out, and the Jews gained control of their land for about one hundred years until Pompey, an acclaimed Roman general, captured the Holy Land and brought it under Roman rule. During this period, the rise of the Antichrist, a deceptive global leader who opposes God and persecutes believers, will present himself as greater than God (2 Thess.2:3-4).